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**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BURIAL CAVES
SOUTH OF THE YANGZI RIVER**

Highland Routes and Frontier Communities
at the Fall of the Han Empire (2nd to 3rd century CE)

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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2018

Department of History of Art and Archaeology
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Abstract

At the fall of the Han Empire, deep-cut valleys south of the Yangzi were blooming with unprecedented activity: ostentatious rock-cut cemeteries, decorated and inscribed, turned the riverside cliffs into theatrical villages of the dead.

This thesis uses a typology of rock-cut burials to map the distribution of frontier groups located on major and minor southern tributaries of the upper Yangzi, at the interface between lowland and highland. Epigraphic material is integrated with the archaeological evidence, with the latter being, in large part, first-hand material collected via direct personal survey of burial chambers cut in sandstone cliffs. This dataset is articulated particularly carefully in locational terms to produce an extended analysis of large-scale craft production and funerary expression while Han imperial presence declines on its southwest frontier (2nd-3rd century CE).

While existing studies have investigated the origin of elite rock-cut tombs under the Western Han (2nd-1st century BCE) in the Central Plains, and the popularity of rock-cut tombs under the Eastern Han (1st-2nd century CE) in the Sichuan basin, they have relied on only a few excavated tombs and historical texts. These studies have not addressed the type of burials identified in this study or the specific environment south of the Yangzi River, which, apart from being an ecological boundary, was also a key political and cultural frontier. The funerary landscape investigated here elucidates the role of frontier groups in times of imperial collapse, and the topographic strategies whereby they constructed their identity. The thesis shows how, in a context of political weakening, secondary trade routes are inhabited by increasingly localized and diversified communities, diverging from funerary practices in the civilisational centres of the plains of Sichuan and the main course of the Yangzi River.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Personal motivation

Memento mori : thereby the living are reminded that they will join the dead someday. Dancing skeletons and skulls are displayed among feasting crowds and the objects of everyday life. Conversely, Eastern Han funerary art has been thought of as a “*Memento vitae*”: domestic architecture and utensils, hunting, fishing scenes and craft production, the farm and its animals, accompany the dead in their last dwelling. This dwelling, however, had to be hidden and sealed hermetically, to keep the dead away from the living and discourage eventual plunderers. The tomb is actually only an illusion of a dwelling, a decoy of sorts: it does not need to be functional in terms of light and air or perform other certain roles that habitations do. This is a space where the essential functions of dwellings just need to be suggested (a stove, a couch, a shelf), a space where the wildest imagination unfolds. Ten years ago, I switched away from a bachelor degree in architecture but I have nonetheless since then continuously looked for an unfaithful double for architecture, considering the practice of archaeology as a form of reverse architecture,¹ and tomb architecture as a form of inverted dwelling, freed of most functional constraints. To me, funerary spaces are an essential field of experimentation in both turning space into place and testing the limits of perception.

Being a foreign researcher with an opportunity to roam throughout the landscape of five provinces of modern China (Sichuan, Chongqing, Guizhou, Hubei, Hunan and Yunnan), from one rock-cut cemetery to another, across several years of time, I felt well-placed to overcome some of the psychological and cultural biases that are encountered in past and current scholarship on the question of “Han tombs” or cemeteries and frontiers. “Han” identity appeared to me as both a work-in-progress and a fragmentary, blurred whole. The frontier was the opportunistic opening of a free zone in time and space, rather than a fixed line on an historical map. I felt that investigating the production of images, spaces and landscapes on the frontier would bring me close to the core issues of culture contact, state formation, change and collapse. Distanced from approaches that emphasise literary references, or others that

¹ Wei and Griffiths 2017.

swear only by visual culture, my endeavour is to try and read the phenomenon through the prism of space, focusing on the human use of space, the creation of a distinctive sense of place, as well as questions of access or ownership. This decision was made in order to include in the discussion all the tombs that have no inscriptions, no carved imagery, and no artefacts. Additionally, my intention is to open an investigation as to how parameters such as site location, visibility or access, can construct otherworldly abodes.

The particular type of Eastern Han tombs selected for this study, rock-cut spaces, are, in my opinion, an ideal case of funerary production caught in a time and place of change, fuelling the transformation of landscape and its use by past human societies. The very material in which the caves are cut, soft sandstone, allowed unprecedented experiments in designing space, and freedom in carving gesture. This spontaneity resulted in blurred distinctions between line carving and sculpture,² but also, and this is where the present thesis focused its efforts, an alternative way to integrate the tomb, the cemetery, and otherworldly geographies in general, to the landscape. It is hoped that such a study will provide a fresh eye on funerary spaces as places. These places construct a psychological boundary between the living and the dead, but also a cultural frontier between the living themselves.

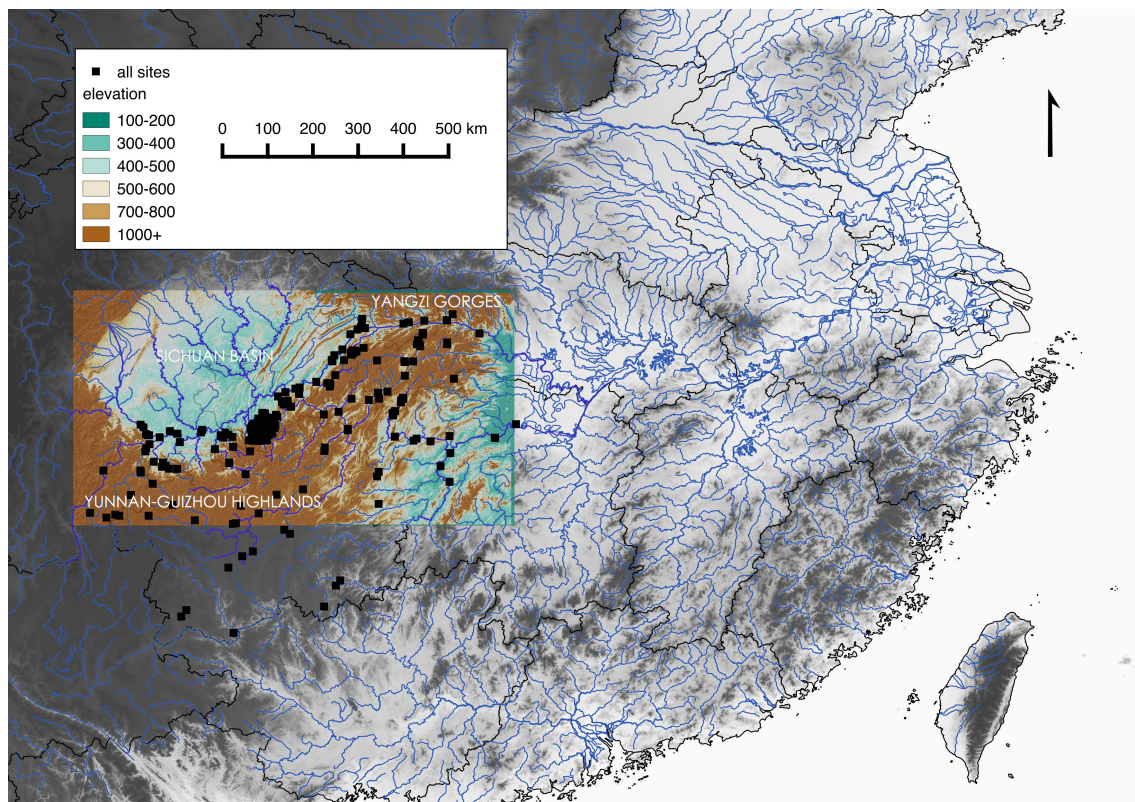
The choice of peripheral areas, rather than the wealthy areas of major production in rock-cut spaces in the agricultural and civilizational centres of the Sichuan basin, determined the focus of this study on contested geographies. Late Eastern Han rock-cut tombs South of the Yangzi do not contain wealthy burial assemblages, they do not show outdoor vestibule halls and complex combinations of multiple rooms and corridors; neither do they display elaborate programmes of pictorial carvings. As cultural expressions, they only retain fragments, of at times essential, core elements of Han culture, while at times also calling upon other cultural references. Conversely, what they do is essentially to promote their very presence in the landscape. Such production of landscape occurred in a context of imperial collapse, extremely creative times for communities who kept a low profile in historical records. These are the voices that I wished to record in this study, because they transcend the linear course of

² Wei 2014.

official history and sketch the contours of hidden lands. While contributing to current scholarly discourses of Eastern Han Funerary art, spaces and places, this study evolved towards an investigation of frontier identities as reflected by funerary landscapes.

1.2 Research question

This research departs from the Chinese marches of the Yunnan-Guizhou plateau, south of the Upper Yangzi River (**Fig.1.1**). The funerary landscape found in this interstitial space, cannot be explained with a simple story of natives versus colonisers, or tribes versus empire. Context, locational strategies and the production of landscapes are essential questions to depart from: What role did the Upper Yangzi area play in interregional dynamics? What are the specific constraints and available resources along the Upper Yangzi? Who settled there and what was their subsistence mode? How did the spatial politics of empire unfold on its southwestern frontier, and what happened when the imperial administration weakened? How does the funerary landscape reflect such spatial politics?



1.1. Location of the study area among natural features in Southwest China.³ The black square indicate all locations that have been taken into account in this study through my own survey, data collection from published archaeological survey, or placenames found in historical texts.

³ All maps for which no provenance is indicated were drawn by myself in QGIS 2.12.0, based on the map datasets detailed in the Bibliography.

The late date of the burials, and their culturally hybrid content, suggest a secondary development and a culturally mixed context of production. The epigraphic material, only datable evidence available to us, defines the historical scale of a century between the late 2nd to the 3rd century CE, which corresponds to a period of collapse of the Han administration. Transmitted texts evoking historical geography of the area, together with the available settlement evidence, will help us refine our understanding of what will increasingly look like one meaningful “region”, with case studies separated by 500km nevertheless appearing highly similar in terms of cemetery organisation, burial typology and carved features. The survey undertaken here verifies, for each and every tributary, the systematic placing of Type 2 tombs on secondary tributaries or transversal routes in the network connecting the Sichuan basin to the highlands, the Yangzi gorges and the Hunan-Hubei plain. This geographical dimension is crucial both in the formulation of an overall research question and in its implementation, this being the main difference between this research and previous studies. This will be further reinforced by a more detailed focus on an understudied tributary of the Yangzi, the Qi River. The final step taken will be to closely inspect the caves and carvings themselves in search of clues on their production, function and meaning. The timely scales of gesture, a day, a human life, a dynasty, an empire; were made to correspond to the spatial scales of sandstone, a cliff, a cave, a locality, a frontier.

1.3 Comparing Type 1 and Type 2 caves

Burials in artificial caves found in Southwest China, also called “cliff tombs” (*yamu* 崖墓), are currently understood as a regional phenomenon participating in the wider reformulation of funerary practices that was occurring during the Han dynasty in China (3rd century BCE to 3rd century CE), where the deceased, who used to be laid in wooden structures buried in vertically-oriented shaft tombs, were increasingly placed in horizontally oriented stone or brick chambers modelled on dwellings of the living.⁴ A rock-cut version of such chambers was elaborated in Eastern Han period Sichuan (1st to 2nd century CE), where it was practiced alongside brick-built chambers, a form of burial encountered elsewhere in the Han Empire. This regional variation similarly privileges a durable material, stone, displays a similar iconographic programme and serves similar

⁴ Thorp 1979; Rawson 1999; Erickson 2006; Wu Hung 2011; Chen Xuan 2015.

ritual functions compared to other contemporary burial forms. In an area centred on the Chengdu plain in the Sichuan Basin, where centuries of immigration from other regions of the empire led to a society dominated by powerful families and their clients, cliff tombs function as a manifestation of social cohesion where the space of the dead mirrors and constructs the familial dwellings of the living, technically allowing more experimentation in terms of tomb structure and encouraging an increased inter-generational consciousness. In accordance with funerary beliefs in Han society, the rock-cut spaces promote both ideals of the afterlife as a continuation of the world of the living, and more transcendent allusions to a heavenly journey of the soul. In the Yangzi gorges area, cliff tombs are often of more simple craftsmanship, but they are the norm in the mid-second century CE, along with burials in brick chambers, and, apart from their lesser concentrations, do not differ fundamentally from burial grounds of the Sichuan basin. These cliff tombs are hereafter called “Type 1” caves.

Not all burials in human-made caves, however, display such indisputable adherence to Han period funerary practices. The only site obviously diverging from such practices that has received scholarly and public attention is the Qigedong site (**Fig.1.2**).⁶ While Qigedong has been treated, to this day, as an oddity, this thesis will show that it is but one among a huge network of cemeteries extending over a 500km area along the south bank of the Yangzi, a buffer zone at the intersection of the Sichuan plain, the Yangzi gorges, and the Yunnan-Guizhou plateau. This research explores the possibility that the man-made caves south of the Yangzi, blooming between the end of the 2nd century CE and the beginning of the 3rd century CE, correspond to a distinctive tradition of disposing of the dead, involving actors whose cultural identity is not yet clear, and designed to serve a function that still has to be discussed.

Burials in man-made caves south of the Yangzi, blooming between the end of the 2nd century CE and the beginning of the 3rd century CE, are single cavities of smaller dimensions, sometimes reduced to shallow niches that can barely contain a single human body. They are not equipped with the rock-cut stove, shelves, coffins and

⁶ Hereafter all site names which are not listed in the General Appendix will be attached their name in Chinese characters. Site names are given in simplified Chinese characters only in the General Appendix (11.7). However, to unify the scripts used in the thesis, which also contains ancient place names and epigraphic material, all names in the main text of the thesis, the bibliography and all other appendixes are given in traditional Chinese characters.

timber-like pictorial decorations characteristic of chambers following the “house model” prevalent in Sichuan cliff tombs. Carved depictions found south of the Yangzi do not correspond entirely to the pictorial repertoire available in cliff tombs in Sichuan, and they are placed outdoors. Considering the above-mentioned differences, I will investigate the hypothesis that the caves south of the Yangzi, on the southwest frontier of the Han Empire, are more than just a local effect of the centralized phenomenon of “Han tombs”, with their differences otherwise explained away by reference to logistical differences in technology, material and terrain. These cliff tombs are hereafter referred to as “Type 2” caves.



1.2. View of the Qigedong site. Changning county, Sichuan province. 122-178 CE.⁷

A working typological definition of cave burials as “Type 1” and “Type 2” will structure field survey and the analysis of the collected data, but these categories are not to be considered as essential, rather they point at interaction between the builders of Type 1 and Type 2 caves, and opportunistic choices made by the latter in how they locate and signal themselves in the landscape.

1.4 Contribution to the field, challenges and aims

This study focuses on a typology of burial caves (Type 2) which do not fit the idea of provincial Han tombs usually applied to the caves in the Sichuan basin and it does so with a survey-based methodology which looks at systematic spatial relations rather than by cherry-picking the occasional decorated, well-conserved or published cave. In this regard, the study is closer to existing works on prehistoric periods or non-Han cultural entities on the Yunnan-Guizhou plateau: the identity of the groups in question is primarily read through their funerary production and their role in the cultural

⁷ All photographic material for which no provenance is indicated was taken by myself during survey.

geography of the area.⁸ The latter is a complex interplay between a buffer zone between contrasting ecological areas south of the Yangzi, the workings of imperial conquest, migrations and cross-cultural trade.

The first challenge encountered by this study was the uniform and monotonous nature of the data: just rock-cut caves. This situation is commonly encountered by those studying rock art: all that is left for us to study are pictorial traces in the landscape, with a clearly located provenance, but without settlements and other categories of material culture attached, and no written history to refer to. While the caves south of the Yangzi have been produced in historical times and in some cases bear inscribed dates in some cases, they are not directly referred to in historical sources. The inscriptions define them as burials, but no artefacts or bodies were found within, most probably because of the cavities are easy to spot for looters and often re-used. Furthermore, nearly no settlement evidence is available in the immediate vicinity of the rock-cut sites. In compensation, the cemeteries' distribution tells of a dense occupation of the land and the caves themselves, as an investment in effort, technology and planning, relate to a scalable population. The sheer number of caves that dot the landscape south of the Yangzi fill a gap in our knowledge of the frontier at that time, and provide a relevant precedent for what can be done with cliff burial evidence in Southwest China in general.

A second major challenge concerns data collection. The previously overlooked Type 2 burials this study focuses on had to be extracted from a large volume of low resolution data, which mentioned little more than a location and cave measurements. Caves located south of the Yangzi are comparatively less decorated and impressive than the Sichuan basin ensembles, and most sites are difficult to access. These aspects discouraged scholars working on Han period remains, as the latter are prolific and pictorially engaging, and prevented this topic from being thoroughly investigated, despite the profusion of caves known since the second national archaeological survey (*quanguo wenwu pucha* 全國文物普查) in the late 80s. The local archaeological administration is reluctant to refresh and revise reports from the 80s, updates being

⁸ Hein 2012; Mengoni 2004.

reduced to monitoring the ineluctable process of decay in which most uncovered sites are caught.

A first undertaking of the thesis was thus to provide direct, visible and well-located evidence for the distribution of the sites south of the Yangzi, by directly collecting the evidence rather than relying on vague typologies usually applied at the level of data collection, as they appear in provincial archaeological atlases (2nd national archaeological survey) or in still unpublished reports (3rd national archaeological survey).⁹ Indeed, potential divergences from known Eastern Han rock-cut burial typologies (Type 1) are not perceptible in available reports. A major achievement reported in this thesis will be to identify Type 2 as a burial form unbiased by existing typologies and modern administrative boundaries, and to demonstrate its typological and locational consistency over a 500km stretch of land along the upper Yangzi, across 5 modern provinces.

The second objective was for this research to do more than describe a vague region where an alternative burial tradition is found, and instead to explore an underlying spatial logic behind the region, which would clarify the historical role of the communities who produced the burials. While in search of a distribution pattern for the caves at the scale of the landscape, I proceeded to a series of case-by-case comparisons between Type 1 and Type 2 cemeteries' locations. A crucial discovery at this point, was to realize that Type 2 caves would constantly prefer secondary southern tributaries of the Yangzi, rather than major fluvial routes where Han settlements and tombs are the norm. Within these secondary routes, such as along the Qi River, our main case study, major Type 2 cemeteries or ornate Type 2 tombs would be located on necessary transportation nodes.

Finally, the above-listed findings, despite what they tell of the role and distribution of frontier communities in a highland landscape, still lacked a closer level of understanding of the material culture, and the people behind it. Through its research process, this study has sought to approach by all possible means what is otherwise a rather unidimensional type of data: burial caves cut in sandstone. Essential questions

⁹ Archaeological Atlas by Province 2002-2009 and National Archeological Survey unpublished data 2009.

at this scale relate to the agency of the caves, as well as the motivations of their owners and builders, and the identity constructed and expressed through the inscriptions and depictions attached to the burials.

As a longer term goal, this research wishes to push prehistory and history closer together in a highland environment, where conflicting temporalities often coexist. Up till now, no communication whatsoever exists between scholarship on prehistoric cliff burials (10th to 3rd century BCE), early historic cliff tombs (2nd to 3rd century CE) and premodern cliff burials (9th to 19th century CE). The 2nd to 3rd century CE caves do not date back to prehistoric times, but although epigraphic as well as historic material is available, they occupy a marginal position in history, rather standing in this blurred period sometimes called “proto-history”. Additionally, by positioning itself at the “periphery of a regional expression of imperial culture”, this dissertation looks at Eastern Han funerary production from the perspective of cultural outsiders. It first does so by defining the area’s own gravity and the local burial practices’ distinctiveness. Ultimately, a novel angle on the myths of that age emerges when discourses on death are materialised in landscape, architecture and the pictorial space. While the research begins as a story of sharp cultural difference, it gradually evolves into one about coexistence and complementarity. Departing from the movement and settling of people along the rivers and routes of an imperial frontier, the thesis gradually plunges into craft and cultural choices. From the cemeteries, caves and carvings, this study then sinks deeper into the mind-sets, motivations and aspirations of the tomb builders. What started as a geopolitical overview of the Imperial frontier, ends as a journey into the mythical abode of the Queen Mother of the West.

1.5 Research method: Fieldwork in several steps

Direct field survey was the first step towards the formulation of my research aims. Survey started with the main decorated cave ensembles in the Sichuan basin in 2009-2012, then gradually shifted to minor ensembles in the hilly area between Sichuan and Chongqing.¹⁰ Finally, my PhD survey focused on the southern rim of the basin and the piedmont area between the Upper Yangzi and the Yunnan-Guizhou plateau. It is in this ecological, cultural and political periphery that preliminary fieldwork identified a

¹⁰ Refer to the fieldwork calendar in Appendix 11.2.1.

distinctive type of burials in artificial caves (Type 2 caves), as compared to Han cliff tombs found in the Sichuan basin and on the main course of the Yangzi River (Type 1 caves). What intuitively looked like a rather different type of cave burial needed to be supported by a more systematic survey and analysis.

Systematic survey showed that the Type 2 caves are consistently present over 500km of the Upper Yangzi, from Yibin in Sichuan to Yichang in Hubei. As it appeared, the Type 2 tradition “avoids” the main course of the Yangzi and its major tributaries and clusters on secondary routes, which we only start to hear of in post-Tang geographies usually as indirectly ruled areas. Instead, Type 1 caves are attached to agglomerations along major tributaries, the best example of it being the recently excavated Huangjinwan 黄金湾 settlement site on the Chishui River.

The next step, after fieldwork, was to collect written sources and archaeological finds in order to reconstruct the 3 main axes of Han communication and travel into the Highlands: *Bodao* along the present-day Jinsha River, the Fu Pass along the present-day Chishui River and the course of the former Ba River, now called Wu River. This proto-historical geography follows the same downstream to upstream and mainstream to secondary stream logic that I applied during survey when comparing Type 1 and Type 2 caves. The exercise provides evidence on the ground for the partial penetration of the territory by the Han (Type 1), using transmitted texts as a “view from the Plain” and Type 2 cemetery locations as a “view from the Highlands”.

Apart from sparse survey in the wider study area, most of my fieldwork occurred in one of the valleys where the caves are impressively clustered and the largest number of inscribed examples are found: the Qi River. Epigraphic evidence points at a narrow temporal scale. Along this single tributary of the Yangzi, one starts to discern how Han administrative centres gradually colonise a stream, and what correspondence can be found between nodes in the routes and bigger cemeteries. This is the point in the thesis where one is at the heart of Type 2 caves phenomenon.

During fieldwork, episodes of a more experimental nature occurred, for example where an attempt was made physically to reconstruct a cave in sandstone, to

reconstruct a wider section of a river valley, or to collect evidence on carving techniques. These experiments aimed to provide a more vivid view of the caves and their makers via a hands-on approach.

1.6 Theoretical framework

This thesis joins forces with studies that have critically questioned the notion of “Han” (*Han* 漢). Chapter 2 of this thesis thus starts by deconstructing the notion of “Han” and identifies its spatial, temporal and ideological components. Chapter 2 shows how inappropriate “Han” is for this study, be it as an ethnonym, as a geographical entity, as a time period or as a funerary culture.

A recently edited volume by Mullaney, entitled “Critical Han Studies”, shows that brainstorming on this notion is still relevant to the field of sinological studies. Several authors gathered in this volume point out the status of Han as an exception compared to ethnyonyms used to designate non-Han groups.¹¹ Long before such studies however, historians who documented the Han conquest of South China such as Wiens already assimilated Han with an identity motivated by orthodoxy and legitimation, rather than with ethnicity.¹² Such views were in line with contemporaneous, wider movements in anthropology led by figures such as Barth,¹³ who sees ethnicity as defined by its boundaries and contact with the “other”. Barth’s theories took more than twenty years to be acknowledged by scholars studying ancient China such as Wang Mingke, in his research on the long-term evolution of an exonym (*Qiang* 羌) on the Western frontier.¹⁴ In the field of Chinese archaeology and especially in the Southwest, this thesis’ area of interest, Barth’s inheritance is still prominent in studies such as Hein’s, on interregional contacts in prehistoric Liangshan.¹⁵ Precisely when it comes to the highlands of Southwest China and Mainland Southeast Asia, anthropology opened the way to a more flexible definition of ethnicity aimed at understanding societies that did not leave their trace in history. Studies such as Leach’s on strategic genealogies among highland groups¹⁶ were recycled recently by Scott. Scott decodes the ambiguous identity of

¹¹ Mullaney 2012.

¹² Wiens 1967.

¹³ Barth 1969.

¹⁴ Wang Mingke 1992.

¹⁵ Hein 2013.

¹⁶ Leach 1973.

highland groups as a political resource, and who argues that these non-State groups, who predominantly practice swidden agriculture, consciously refuse to enter history and acquire literacy.¹⁷ The latest study in Chinese archaeology that reflects Scott's theories is Yao's "Highlands of Ancient Southwest China". However, Yao focuses on Dian, a "civilization" or "kingdom" that went through a process of recognition, assimilation and was attributed a name that entered history.¹⁸ While it borrows some of Scott's description of the contrast between lowland and highland cultures in mainland Southeast Asia,¹⁹ my thesis looks at an ecological buffer rather than at the highlands themselves.

Scholars working on the Xiongnu 匈奴 or later the Xianbei 鮮卑, both pastoralist groups from the Northern steppes who adopted Han identity in early imperial and early medieval times, are similarly brought to the question of "sinicization" or "barbarization",²⁰ and to the problem of providing a definition of Han from an outsider's perspective. From all margins of Han imperial presence, one can sense the setting of a general trend "towards an integrated view of Han frontiers".²¹ Specific environments, be it steppes or highlands, hosting semi-nomadic or mobile groups who were related by loose alliances and formed the buffer zones of stronger political entities. Scholarship on such groups developed a flexible notion of ethnicity and noted their similar roles in history and comparable cultural choices. Attempts were already made at an early stage to find common elements in the material culture of non-State, semi-nomadic societies from the steppes, piedmonts and highlands bordering the Chinese Empire, an area federated by Tong Enzheng under the denomination "crescent-shaped cultural communication belt" (*banyuexing wenhua chuanbodai* 半月形文化傳播帶).²² As an alternative to the focus on acculturation in frontier societies, notions attached to environmental specificity, subsistence and mobility increasingly attract scholarly attention. Honeychurch, for example, describes in terms of "politics of space" the interaction between state and non-state societies, and the contribution of the latter

¹⁷ Scott 2009.

¹⁸ Yao 2015.

¹⁹ Scott 2009.

²⁰ Elliott 2011.

²¹ Di Cosmo 2009.

²² Tong's writings have been recently revisited in an edited volume by Hein, for a discussion on the translation for the term, see Hein 2014:1.

in the formative steps of the Chinese Empire.²³ In this thesis, the questions of ethnicity and identity are rooted in the notion of frontiers and its spatial expressions.

The studies reviewed above, and others, have questioned the notion of ethnicity and the very use of ethnic attribution (especially in the fields of history and anthropology rather than for archaeological material) departing from an in-depth redefinition of what makes identity, and evolving towards an analysis including the role of political entities, social complexity and interaction. The ecotones of the Chinese Southwest have been an ideal terrain to develop these theories. In line with the above-mentioned studies, this thesis looks at past groups for whom an identity remains elusive and with little no trace in transmitted history, but instead, indelibly marked the piedmont and highland landscapes of the Southwest frontier in physical, archaeologically-recoverable ways. Although it departs from the assumed Han funerary ideology, this study deconstructs it through the lens of the approaches cited above, and roots this critical discourse in an example of funerary craft production delimited in time, space and matter.

As a contribution to recent and current scholarship on the notion of “Han”, Chapter 2 of this study will thus:

- In section 2.2: Propose the idea of locational identity or topographic identity as a way to produce a constructive definition of identity more adapted to the cultural landscape of ancient Southwest China, and which makes sense of the caves’ distribution. Major routes that left a trace in history are compared to the anonymous secondary routes. For reasons explained in section 3.2.3 of Chapter 3, data collection on the distribution of caves was systematic but did not lead to a quantitative study. Rather, a qualitative approach based on survey and case-to-case comparisons (section 3.1 and Chapter 5), published archaeological reports and historical texts (sections 4.3 and 4.2), led to the identification of a hierarchy within the network of routes.
- In section 2.3: Open a temporal window (provided by epigraphic inscriptions found in the caves, focused on one century instead of a shapeless “Han period”) located at the fall of the Han to historicize the question of Han rather

²³ Honeychurch 2016.

than essentialising it, and to frame the interplay of empire and identities on the frontier. The status of the area south of the Yangzi is compared to Han metropolitan and centres in times of imperial collapse. Several factors and consequences of imperial collapse encountered in other historical or geographical contexts will be confronted to Southwest China in the late Han period. Among those, phenomena such as administrative fragmentation, the rise of specific social groups and the development of alternative networks of communication and trade will be insisted upon.

- In section 2.4: Question the role of craft traditions, funerary spaces and visual culture in the construction of identities, and provide an art historical profile for the carvings that matches the idea of strategic identities. Type 1 Han cliff tombs as they have been defined in the Sichuan basin and the Three Gorges area are compared to newly identified Type 2 burials in artificial caves. To revisit existing typologies and allow previously unknown types of burial and carvings to be taken into account, this thesis adopts a pragmatic approach towards Han period stone working. After describing the collected information on burial sites and caves in sections 6.1 to 6.4 of Chapter 6, my experiment in replicating a rock-cut cave is reported in section 6.5. Attention is devoted to the technological choices made in the carving sequence of a cave, as well as , in section 7.1.13 of Chapter 7 , cultural and technological aspects perceptible in the epigraphic material. As an introduction to the study of carved depictions in Chapter 8, section 8.1 completes the re-evaluation of conceptual tools usually applied to Han period stone working and looks for more flexible ways to interpret carvings south of the Yangzi.

Theoretical questions raised in Chapter 2 from the notion of “Han” and methodological choices explained in Chapter 3 are thus echoed by concepts mobilized within core Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, and synthesized in the final discussion in Chapter 9.

Chapter 9 pushes forward the initial set of concepts and, backed up by the data exposed in the core chapters, proposes a wider theoretical framework including the following points (section 9.3 in Chapter 9):

- “Gateway communities” are located at strategic points of the trade network, such as Huangjinwan on the Chishui River, a major tributary of the Yangzi River (section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4), which corresponds to known historical routes (section 2.2.2 in Chapter 2 and section 4.3.3 in Chapter 4).
- The Type 2 cave builders flourish along secondary tributaries and routes such as Zhenxi on the Qi River (section 5.3.5 in Chapter 5), which are absent from the historical record.
- In a context of political collapse, the Type 2 caves’ locations could correspond to a parallel network motivated by tax avoidance and controlled by private producers. Such parallel can be seen as combining pre-existing paths and offshoots of the gateway community model.
- The Type 2 rock-cut cemeteries are part of the production of an alternative landscape, and the typology of the caves and carvings correspond to the visual identity chosen by the communities at hand.

1.7 Chapters outline

Chapter 2 (“Questioning approaches to Han”) presents the critical attitude adopted by this research on three main issues. Firstly, by locating itself in times of imperial collapse rather than in a shapeless “Han period”, this research provides a narrow and focused historical window on Eastern Han rule in the Southwest, marked out by a group of epigraphic inscriptions. Secondly, the southwest frontier is deconstructed as a producer of locational or topographic identities as a way to nuance the binary and essentialised opposition of “Han colonists” against “natives”. Thirdly, the idea of “Han tombs” as a static model is opposed to a more flexible understanding of the role of craft traditions and funerary spaces in the construction of identities. The chapter ends on a comparison between Han cliff tombs as known from the Sichuan basin and the Three Gorges area, and the newly identified type of burials in artificial caves which is the object of this study.

Chapter 3 (“Survey strategy, data collection and interpretation”) formalises the multi-disciplinary approach I prefer, and gives an overview of the data mobilized by this study: official histories, archaeological excavations, published or shared results by the county-level archaeological offices (*wenwu guanli suo* 文物管理所, literally “office for

the management of cultural relics”, hereafter simplified as “archaeological office”), and data from my own survey. With an attached fieldwork calendar, the chapter first shows how survey in the field and research questions fed each other and evolved over the years. Then, methods for data collection and survey tested and applied during survey are explained. Finally, theoretical frameworks which contributed to the interpretation of the collected data are referred to.

Chapter 4 (“Contextualizing Type 1 cemeteries south of the Yangzi”) gathers data about resources, settlements and transportation from three areas, the Yangzi gorges, the tributaries South of the Yangzi, and the Guizhou plateau, focusing on locations where cliff tombs dated to the Eastern Han period are found. For the gorges, data is collected from published volumes (Three Gorges 1997-2009) and personal survey with the archaeologists’ team of the Chongqing Cultural Heritage Centre. For the tributaries south of the Yangzi, settlement data is obtained through personal survey with the archaeologists’ team of the Guizhou Provincial Institute of Archaeology. Instead, for the Guizhou plateau itself, only disparate publications are available. The three areas in question constitute a buffer zone between the civilizational centres of the Sichuan and Hunan-Hubei plains and the Yunnan-Guizhou highlands, and share a set of ecological, topographical and cultural characteristics. This exercise in landscape archaeology provides a context for the cliff tombs produced in these three areas.

Chapter 5 (“Distribution of Type 2 tombs along minor tributaries of the Yangzi”) is almost exclusively based on my own survey, with the help of published archaeological atlases and the contribution of unpublished reports from the 3rd national archaeological survey shared by local county-level archaeological offices. Following an account of the distribution and typology of cliff tombs as they are found in the core centres of the Sichuan basin as well as in the three areas reviewed in the previous chapter (Type 1), this chapter then goes on to identify both an alternative spatial distribution and alternative typology of cliff tombs along minor affluents of the southern tributaries of the Yangzi River (Type 2). A series of comparisons between lowland and highland sites along four major Southern tributaries of the Yangzi and their minor affluents, is concluded by a synthetic view of the full extent of the Type 2 cave burial phenomenon and a definition of Type 2 burial caves.

Chapter 6 (“Type 2 cemeteries and caves along the Qi River”) focuses on only one among the minor southern tributaries of the Yangzi River, and gives a typological profile of Type 2 caves and cemeteries, with a detailed account of how the funerary practice functioned at the scale of a single river valley. Structural elements such as the recessed doors and wall dressings are included in this typological profile as markers of a stone-working tradition. The static aspect of typology is here tempered by a report on an experiment in replicating a recessed door and a rock-cut cave in sandstone, which I led in May 2014.

In Chapter 7 (“Comparative study of inscriptions in Type 1 and Type 2 burial caves”), philological tools are applied to the epigraphic inscriptions in Chinese script found in the study area, most of them being clustered in the Qi river area, which provide a partial temporal window spanning from 121 CE to 223 CE for a small proportion of caves. These raise a number of questions about the cave-making process, its function, and the identity of the people involved.

In Chapter 8 (“Comparative study of depictions in Type 1 and Type 2 burial caves”), an enquiry is offered that compares carvings found South of the Yangzi and their counterpart in cliff tombs of the Sichuan basin. Certain mechanisms that result from cultural borrowing such as reduction, simplification, misunderstanding, hybridization, etc. are identified. The carvings attached to Type 2 sites, both epigraphic and pictorial, are simple incisions, added to the cliff before, during or after completion of the cave, thus retaining a relative autonomy towards the funerary space. However, some motifs such as the towers (*que* 闕) exhibit a rather systematic distribution, not necessarily corresponding to their original location and function within “Han cliff tombs” of the Sichuan basin. Departing from architectural representations and the spatial distribution of motifs, this chapter ends by proposing that the design of the cliff cemeteries were designed as a whole, based on a series of clay models representing the imaginary abode of the Queen Mother of the West.

Chapter 9 (“Discussion”) offers a summary of all the evidence produced in previous chapters and seeks to unify arguments deriving from each distinct dimension of this

research into a coherent narrative. It gives a comparative definition of Type 1 and Type 2 burials, based on the context of land use and the proto-historical geography reconstructed in chapters 4 and 5. It lists a series of cultural markers of the Type 2 funerary tradition as an alternative to the idea of “Han tombs”, covered in chapters 6, 7 and 8. Chapter 9 looks for the motivations of the Type 2 cave-builders and proposes a profile for the groups in question.

2 Questioning approaches of “Han”

In this chapter, a first section gathers definitions of “Han” that have been made by frontier historians or archaeologists. The following section sets the geographic framework for this study: a long-term picture of territorial administration, routes and population movement brought by imperial presence in the wider study area. Section 3 focuses on the historic moment corresponding to epigraphic inscriptions found in cliff tombs south of the Yangzi, analysing the rise of local identities in a context of imperial collapse. The chapter concludes with a section that questions the notion of “Han tombs”, highlighting the limits and pitfalls of the debate on ethnicity which still burdens the study of burial caves south of the Yangzi today. This section introduces the comparison between cliff tombs in the Sichuan basin and Yangzi gorges (Type 1) as opposed to cliff tombs south of the Yangzi (Type 2) on a locational basis. Both the idea of Han and the ethnonyms used to designate frontier groups are the result of a process of mutual recognition, and as the material evidence at hand is the expression of intense socio-cultural change, the thesis largely functions in a comparative way.

An appendix to Chapters 2, 4 and 5 entitled “11.1.Timeline” provides the detail of historical events, names and place names mentioned in the text (hereafter: Timeline + entry number).

2.1 Defining “Han”

The problems surrounding the definition of ethnicity are central to the discipline of anthropology and, as noted by Wang Mingke, if “anthropologists feel that it is difficult to demarcate ethnic entities, then archaeologists would have the same problem”.¹ The relationship between ethnicity, language and material culture is neither direct nor stable, and cultural markers selected by archaeologists in their definition of an archaeological culture remain controversial. This thesis benefits from the efforts of anthropologists, archaeologists and historians who focused on “Han”, an ethnonym that underwent several thousand years of construction. Theoretical and methodological biases related to the confused perception of “Han” are still topical,

¹ Wang Mingke 1992:151.

especially when it comes to expressions of areas and times considered culturally marginal, such as the late Eastern Han cave burials investigated here, in the highlands of Southwest China.

Ethnic group designations are, as argued by Barth, created through interaction.² In the 1950s, while studying the Kachins of northern Burma, Leach applied Barth's idea that social units are produced by subjective processes of categorical ascription rather than objective criteria.³ In other terms, ethnic units are less defined by the observer's criteria than by the natives themselves. Further progress in recognizing the subjectivity of ethnic classification regards ethnicity as a dynamic, dependent variable that evolves when submitted to external constraints. The stress on culture contact and the manipulation of ethnic identities is here essential. Culture contact triggers mechanisms of cultural transformation, ranging from acculturation (or incorporation) to resistance. New cultural boundaries are built, where the culture of the donor group is adopted, or where the native group's identity is instead reinforced. Interaction is thus not equal to dilution or erasure of ethnic boundaries, but it can lead to an increased expression of ethnic differences. Crucially for the purpose of this study, in areas and times of increased culture contact, when confronted with cultural exchange and economic interdependence, groups can strive to construct and maintain their distinct identity. Between acculturation and resistance, degrees of mixedness produce social practices that combine pre-existing elements in both cultures. Each term of the equation adopts part of each other's cultural practices, resulting in cultural forms that are neither native nor foreign, a process referred to as hybridization or creolization.⁴ Culture contact can thus lead to change in both involved systems, and acculturation is rarely complete. As the process is two-sided, the identification of a foreign and a local, a donor and a receiver is not always adequate. Again, distinctive groups are often the result, rather than the prerequisite of contact.

Anthropologist Wang Mingke applied the idea of an ethnic group or boundary being a dynamic concept to the Qiang 羌 of western Sichuan. The Qiang's location and definition in historical records shifted constantly, from the Bronze Age to the Han

² Barth 1969:10.

³ Leach 1954.

⁴ Yao 2008:8.

period, in parallel to the construction of the Han themselves. Through defining Qiang as the “other”, the Han built a definition for their own identity. Similarly, Elliott shows the crucial part played by the northern steppe groups in processes of identification, proposing that it was the barbarians who constructed Han,⁵ just like in the two-sided, intersubjective processes of categorical ascription identified by Barth. The term “Han” as an ethnic designation is a late construct, which dates back to the 4th to 6th centuries CE. Only when the Han became politically marginalized did the term come to designate ethnicity.⁶ Before that, the term referred to the Han dynasty founded by Liu Bang 劉邦 in 206 BCE, while other terms were used for self-definition by Han period subjects of the empire such as *Zhongguo* 中國, *Hua* 華, and *Xia* 夏. The ethnonym “Han” thus evolves from a dynastic era name, to an equivalent for orthodoxy. Wiens notes that south-eastern Chinese populations designate themselves as “Tang people” (*Tangren* 唐人), rather than “Han people” (*Hanren* 漢人), because it is only under the Tang dynasty that the people of that region actually experienced acculturation.⁷ The notions of autonym (self-denomination by a group) and exonym (naming of one group by another) are helpful to deconstruct assumptions about ethnic labels. Ethnic labels in Chinese documents are mostly exonyms, and there is often no way to prove these terms have ever been used as autonoms by a group who would identify with it. Such exonyms cover huge geographical and temporal spans, grouping under one ethnic label communities that might well have possessed ties, but not necessarily identified with a same ethnic group.

In the last decades, following the rise of regionalist archaeology, revisiting binary “Han/non-Han” views became conceivable.⁸ Regional studies had an early start in Southwest China, especially in the Chengdu plain,⁹ and increased attention was devoted to interregional contacts and cultural assimilation in the Southwest Highland areas. In Southwest China, groups appear and disappear in different locations and at different moments, their visibility in the historical record being due to increased

⁵ Elliott 2011:177.

⁶ Elliott 2011:180.

⁷ Wiens 1967:XIV.

⁸ Von Falkenhausen 1995.

⁹ The Sichuan basin, because of its secluded geographic location behind mountain ranges separating it from the Central Plains, was perceived as the ideal geographical entity to attribute a regional identity to, from the bronze age cultures of Sanxingdui and Jinsha to the medieval independent polities of Shu Han 蜀漢 (221-263 CE) and Chen 陳 (557-589 CE), but also for later regional expressions of Buddhist sculpture and cave from the Tang period onwards (7th cent. CE).

contact with the civilizational centres that produce written history. Endorsing a Chinese language name, or accepting to be named by Chinese standards, marks the direct entry of a previously anonymous frontier group into history, as Yao notes for the unique case of the Dian king and his royal seal.¹⁰ Geographically closer to Chinese civilizational centres compared to the Dian, groups inhabiting dependent states and ruled by native officials generally played the role of cultural intermediaries, located between the Chinese and their neighbours. The Han classified their barbarians on a scale from raw to cooked.¹¹ According to the degree of “cooking”, three models of interaction between south-western groups and the Han state have been proposed by Harrell for the Yi. In a first model of “raw”, initial contact, the group inhabits a remote location in terms of distance or altitude and is self-sufficient, possessing its own script. In the second model, strong and thriving communities grouped in powerful local families use Chinese script for communication. Finally, at the third degree of acculturation, the native groups live intermixed with the Chinese and have lost their language, dress and customs, living in economically disadvantaged marginality. This third group includes the invisible and silent displaced urban masses who inhabited the margins of Han civilization.¹² Wang Mingke views the outcome of such acculturation processes as ultimately being solved by “objective” ecological boundaries between different subsistence modes, for example agriculturalists and pastoralists.

The “hard evidence” of archaeological remains is often exploited in attempts to establish an origin for these essentialised ethnic groups (ethno-genesis). Material culture is mobilized to materialise ethnonyms found in textual sources and to push native histories further back in time. But, as stated by Wang Mingke, such a quest for origins “is endless; if one has enough data, the origin of the Ch’iang [*Qiang* 羌] can even be traced to the era of apes”.¹³ Finally, Wang points at three major biases in scholarship involving the history of ethnic units which are still problematic today, more than fifty years after Barth’s theories were spread:

(1) “The people under the same ethnonym in Chinese documents are regarded as belonging to the same ethnic unit. Mass migration and descent are mobilized to explain the broad distribution of an ethnic unit in time and in space.

¹⁰ A seal with the title of king (*wang* 王), excavated in Shizaishan, was bestowed to the Dian leader by the Han administration. Yao 2015:5.

¹¹ Fiskesjo 1999.

¹² Harrell 1990:533. Kleeman recycled this model for the ancient Ba. Kleeman 1998:50.

¹³ Wang Mingke 1992:157.

(2) An ethnic unit is also a cultural unit. The people in the same ethnic unit share the same cultural elements, including languages. Therefore ethnic affiliation can be identified or traced by the cultural traits of the people, either from archaeological remains or from historical sources.

(3) Based on Chinese sources, it is possible to reconstruct the ethno-genesis of a non-Chinese people. This ethno-genesis could represent objective historical facts, even if it is unknown to the non-Chinese people themselves.”¹⁴

Having taken the necessary precautions towards the notion of “Han”, this chapter will avoid ethnic designation and provide instead a geographically circumscribed and temporally limited context for the funerary expression at hand. The cave-builders will not be ascribed a specific ethnonym, rather, their identity will be approached as a work in progress on the late Han frontier.

2.2 “Han colonist”: Frontiers, culture contact and the construction of ethnicity

Authors researching the archaeology of pre-imperial Sichuan or the settlement of Imperial rule in the region have in common the recognition of a composite structure for the Southwest, reflected in its physical geography (**See Fig.1.1**). The Sichuan basin holds precocious agriculturalist settlements, later to be the administrative centre of an imperial commandery. Another comparably wealthy lowland centre is located in the Hubei-Hunan plain, while the Yangzi gorges are an east-west hub connecting these two lowland centres. Traditionally known for its connective role, the Yangzi gorges have recently been re-baptized “Ancient Central China”,¹⁵ emphasizing its primary role in establishing interregional contacts up until the end of the Bronze Age. Affluents of the Yangzi River function as north-south corridors between lowland and highland territories. This study will look exclusively at the southern tributaries of the Yangzi, which connect the Sichuan basin and the Yangzi gorges to the Yunnan-Guizhou plateau. The legacy of pre-imperial geographies can be followed down half a millennia later, when interregional connections are being re-negotiated at the fall of the Han Empire.

2.2.1 Transition to empire along the Yangzi River: Shu 蜀, Ba 巴, and Chu 楚

Imperial formation and imperial collapse are both phases of intense culture contact, and correspond to similar processes of identity formation. Mengoni establishes a

¹⁴ Wang Mingke 1992:147.

¹⁵ Flad 2013.

parallel between the moment preceding the formation of the Qin Empire in the 3rd century BCE and the weakening of Han administration in the 2nd to 3rd centuries CE.¹⁶

When addressing the pre-imperial Southwest, Mengoni shows how the use of written records to construct a local past lead to the rigid attribution of named political, cultural or ethnic units to local archaeological assemblages.¹⁷ The denominations Shu 蜀, Ba 巴, Chu 楚, respectively correspond to the geographic units identified above: Sichuan basin, Yangzi gorges and Hunan-Hubei plain (**Fig.2.1**). Interactions in the form of alliances and conflicts between the Shu, Ba and Chu are generally dated back in transmitted texts to the 8th-7th centuries BCE.¹⁸ The agrarian state of Shu appears in the Shang dynasty oracle bones records, and in the Warring States period it has commercial and matrimonial relations with the central plains. Ba, closer to a grouping of loose tribal entities, does not appear in the Shang records, but archaeology has provided arguments for it having organized large-scale salt extraction on the Yangzi, initiating long-distance trade with the plain polity of Chu in the Bronze Age. Relations between Ba, Shu and Chu were not of a simple centre-periphery nature, they rather tend towards an alternative model where areas with different political-economic structures – tribal in the case of Ba and state-like in the case of Chu – practice trade, without it being formalized into a form of domination or assimilation.¹⁹

The reconfiguration of human temporalities and geographies in Southwest China dates back to the 4th century BCE, with the arrival of the Qin in the Sichuan basin and the gradual establishment of the commandery system. The Qin State gave priority to the fertile and wealthy Sichuan basin (Shu commandery), while the Yangzi gorges (Ba commandery) play a crucial role in extending Qin rule to the East, then under the control of Chu. Shu, Ba and slightly later Chu, were annexed by the Qin state between the 5th and 3rd centuries BCE, but their new status as commanderies levelled only in appearance their essentially different roles in interregional history. Indeed, the Qin State employed double standards to deal with the Shu and Ba commanderies, both in terms of law enforcement and migration planning. Subsequent frontier policies under

¹⁶ Mengoni 2010.

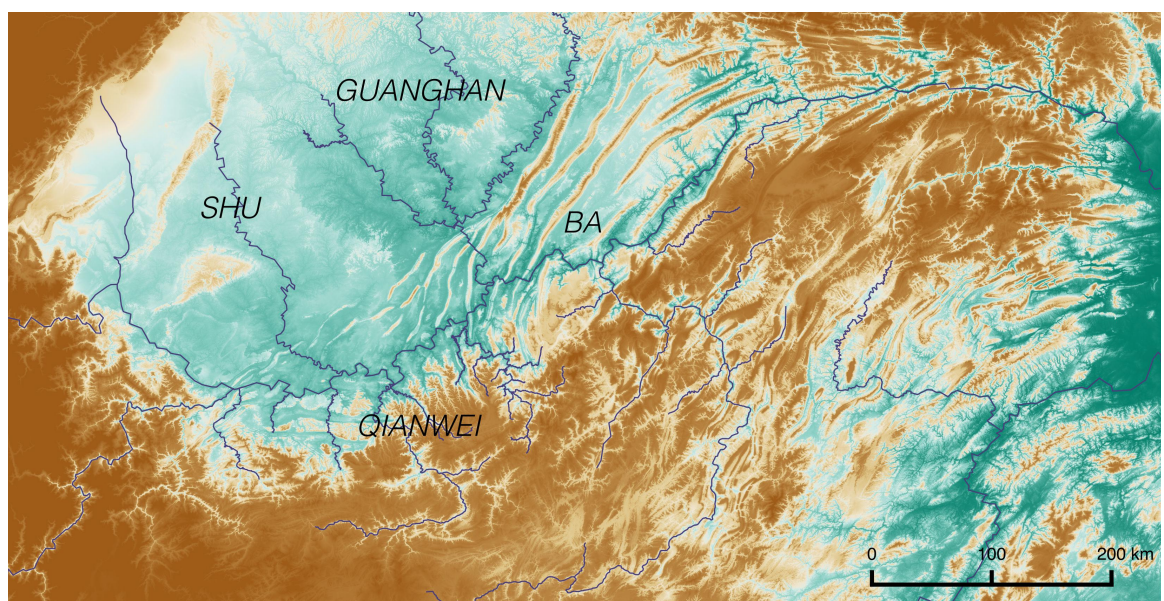
¹⁷ Mengoni 2004:52.

¹⁸ Crump 1996 cited in Mengoni 2004:45. See also Timeline 3.

¹⁹ Von Falkenhausen 2006.

Han retained this model, with the Sichuan basin growing as a strong regional power directly connected to the imperial capital, and the Yangzi gorges specializing in warfare and trade as well as salt extraction.

Among the 36 commanderies established by Qin, the Southwest counts four: Shu, Ba, Guanghan 廣漢 and Qianwei 犍為. Among these four, Shu functioned as a laboratory for Qin rule over the rest of China, a secure provider of resources for Qin campaigns, and, because of its easily controllable access points, a “venue for internal exile”.²⁰ Migrants from the Central Plains introduced technological innovations and a mature administrative system, but this happened mostly in the plain around Chengdu and along the course of the Min River 岷江, which was first modified by the Dujiangyan water management system by Li Bin 李冰 under Qin (c. 250 BCE). According to Okawa, only the western plains centred on Chengdu were fully developed, while county-level agglomerations in other parts of Sichuan were more likely dots connected with routes or waterways. Imperial administration, with its constantly shifting centres and boundaries, seems to remain largely an official fiction, with little impact on existing communities and ecotones. Only after the Han did areas that lay in-between routes start developing as well.²¹ While Shu and Guanghan were under direct rule of the empire, the southeastern part of Ba and the Qianwei commandery remained a laboratory for frontier administration (**Fig.2.1**).



²⁰ Sage 1992:154.

²¹ Okawa 2006:15.

- 2.1. Approximate location of the Shu, Guanghan, Ba and Qianwei commanderies. circa 135 BCE to 9 CE. This map is based on De Crespigny's "Map of South China at the End of the Han and the location of administrative centres" (Generals of the South 2004 internet version). No borders are drawn on this map as historical sources do not provide this information. Borders on historical maps are modern reconstructions, often cutting through mountainous areas which status remain uncertain.

The Han inherited the frontier administration system of the Qin with its four levels of administrative units: dependent state (*shuguo* 属国), commandery (*jun* 郡), county (*xian* 縣) and military unit (*bu* 部). In late Han times, Shu, Guanghan and Jianwei each had an attached dependent state. The dependent state, attached to the margins of a commandery, is "largely inhabited by non-Chinese people, (and) subject to a stricter military government than the settled regions of the interior".²² Officers in charge of a unit within the dependent state would still leave it to local chiefs, and taxes remained negotiable. This was the first expression of a frontier regime (*bianjun zhidu* 邊郡制度) of incomplete assimilation.

2.2.2 Southern campaigns and the Qianwei commandery 犍為郡

Chinese historical records mention two major military campaigns, the 298-280 BCE expedition of Chu general Zhuang Qiao 庄賈, and that of Western Han general Tang Meng 唐蒙 in 135-130 BCE. Campaign routes led the way to the delimitation of new territories and identities. Through these "tunnels" dug by recorded historical events, one can get a grasp of intertwined political entities, cultural groups and trade routes on the southwest frontier.

General Zhuang Qiao was sent by Chu to Dian 滇, in present day Yunnan province, supposedly through a land called Yelang 夜郎, in present day Guizhou province. Blocked on his way back to Chu by a Qin counterstroke (281 BCE), he became king of Dian, changed his dress and adopted local customs.²³ The historical event has been interpreted as both a legend constructed by local elites to gain legitimacy and inscribe themselves in imperial history, and an example of how incomers from the plain cultures adapted to the cultural setting of the southern polities. Along with such emblematic episodes of conquest turned acculturation, other facts pull the areas south of the Yangzi into the imperial orbit. Qin and Han rulers built roads to connect the

²² De Crespigny 1989:xlvi-l.

²³ Timeline 4.

Sichuan basin to the area south of the Yangzi, and sent officials to control the roads.²⁴ The titanic road-building project of the “Five *chi* wide road” (*Wuchi dao* 五尺道) for example, a first road-building enterprise named so because of its narrowness (Qin period *chi* 尺 corresponds to roughly a metre wide), probably departed from present day Chongqing towards north-west Guizhou, along the Chongqing-Guiyang highway and was more than a thousand kilometres long.²⁵

However, after the extermination of Qin by Han in 209-206 BC, contacts between Shu and several south-western tribes were abandoned. Frontier outposts were subsequently established on the limits of Shu,²⁶ and circulation across the frontier landscapes were subject to strict regulations.²⁷ Although Shu frontiers were closed, the Ba and Shu populations continued a prosperous unofficial trade with the south-western tribes. The traces of this interaction in Central Asia, mainly bamboo and silk items, attracted Han Emperor Wudi’s attention to the region later on.²⁸ Wudi failed repeatedly in his attempts to monopolize the trade routes controlled by the south-western tribes, including the betel route to Nanyue 南越 in present day Guangdong province. The latter constituted general Tang Meng’s 唐蒙 main argument to take over Yelang in 夜郎 135-130 BCE, in-between Shu and Nanyue. He did so following the southern tributaries of the Yangzi²⁹ with an army of only 1000 men, including soldiers, mercenaries and recruited exiles, but with an enormous cohort of 10,000 porters.³⁰ Tang Meng visited Duo Tong 多同, king of Yelang, whose sons became officials and district prefects under the imperial administration. He established the Qianwei commandery across the mountains south of the Yangzi River, around 115-111 BCE. The administrative centre of Qianwei was displaced several times, from present-day Zunyi, Guizhou province, to present-day Yibin, Sichuan province, in 86 BCE. Promoted governor (*duwei* 都尉), Tang Meng requisitioned more men and resources from the Ba and Shu plains for his road building operations : “Mountains had to be dug in for more than 1,000 li”³¹ in order to build suspended paths (*zhandao* 栈道).

²⁴ Timeline 9.

²⁵ Hervouet 1964:77.

²⁶ Hervouet 1964:79.

²⁷ Timeline 15.

²⁸ Timeline 24.

²⁹ The potential routes followed by Tang Meng will be investigated in Chapter 4.

³⁰ Timeline 19.

³¹ Hervouet 1964:86.

In Sage's words, the Western Han campaigns

"set the course of relations between China and its south-western neighbours for many centuries to come. Judged in terms of initial Han ambitions it amounted to retrenchment. Real territorial acquisitions were marginal when measured against the risk and unforeseen costs incurred. Some of the gains may be considered merely cosmetic, consisting of lands formally annexed by the Han Empire as commanderies but left under de facto control by their indigenous chieftains. The arrangement rather resembled the laissez-faire formula employed by Qin in the initial stages of its absorption of Ba."³²

Sage underlines how mind-boggling the failure of Tang Meng's enterprises are, departing from the rich and fertile Sichuan basin, well provided in grain, iron weapons and tools, but also salt, cash crops and manufactured products, as compared to the successful Han campaigns in the North, a much poorer and harsher environment. To him, the best answer to this problem is environmental:

"Chinese civilization, in essence, is a lowland civilization. To irrigate and cultivate low-lying, level areas demands less effort than terracing and watering hillsides. China hardly lacks mountains, to be sure, but culture and control emanate from the flatter, lower stretches of terrain interspersed between and among the cordilleras. At the edges of Sichuan, though, Han commanders faced a solid and seemingly endless massif. This was the mountaineers' own element. Overwhelming Han power might have persisted in advancing a bit farther, but the mountain men, and the mountains, exacted too steep a price to make winning worthwhile."³³

Most studies on the area for later historical periods similarly highlight the importance of the physical landscape in shaping cultural exchange, as if the specific configuration of the area had provided it with a similar role throughout history. Kleeman has looked at the Chen state (4th century CE) for example, producing a narrative of specific political and religious entities constituted of multi-ethnic highland population.³⁴ Han presence subsisted in pockets such as the Luzhou plain, with Von Glahn's study on the Southern bank of the Yangzi providing a model of interaction based on the tea horse

³² Sage 1992:189.

³³ Sage 1992:192.

³⁴ Most powerful local families of Sichuan fled to Hunan when southwestern groups are called upon to enter Shu under the Chen state (557-589 CE), and the Three Gorges area was greatly impoverished. War scared away traders, and the reduced population impeached the exploitation of salt resources. In Tang times, the eastern gorges were the poorest place ever, with nobody but exiled officials having to take appointments in the area, a poverty which is reflected in accounts by exiled literati. The situation under the Song was still precarious, with some positions at the subcounty-levels seat such as Ba xian remaining vacant for 8 years. Kleeman 1998 and 2002.

trade routes under the Song (10th century CE) for that particular area.³⁵ The context facilitating the rise of innovative polities such as the Chen or the formation of trade hubs such as the Luzhou plain, remains the buffer zone between plain and highland.

2.2.3 Migrant populations and acculturation: the blurring of identities

From Qin to Han times, the south-western area went into an accelerated rate of migration, resulting in the blurring of identities on the frontier.³⁶ Tens of thousands of households moved to Shu under Qin.³⁷ Migrant groups known under the reign of Emperor Wu of Han, around 110-105 BCE, included local powerful elites exiled from other provinces.³⁸ Unlike mass migrations to Shu commandery in the Qin and Han periods, also involving Ba commandery under Han, colonization south of the Yangzi dispatched only a small number of Han officials to strategic outposts. Apart from officials, incomers also included a small but growing population of exiled Han population seeking land and freedom beyond the frontiers of the empire. The Han state continued the earlier Qin practice of resettling Sichuan criminals on land seized from the southern barbarians, to support the army.³⁹ The roads were deemed dangerous,⁴⁰ as many criminals were on their way to remote locations, which functioned as a form of confinement.⁴¹ Incomers included campaigning soldiers, with a dozen expeditions in Han times amounting to around 400,000 soldiers.⁴²

Three main movements of population are detectable in the written record for the Eastern Han period. In the early to mid-Eastern Han period (1st to 2nd century CE) migrants move to the province or the highland outposts. In the mid-Eastern Han period (2nd century CE), migrants reach the Three Gorges area and the region south of the Yangzi. Finally, in the late Eastern Han (3rd century CE), an abrupt decline is registered for the area. These three moments respectively correspond to the production of rock-cut monuments in the metropolitan area, in the major fluvial hubs, and along the secondary routes investigated in this study.

³⁵ Von Glahn 1987.

³⁶ These movements of population seem to coincide with the rising importance of geography and landscape descriptions, ranging from poetic fu to local records, showing the advent of regional awareness. Hu Axiang 2010:607.

³⁷ Timeline 6.

³⁸ Bin Yang 2009:144-5.

³⁹ Timeline 12.

⁴⁰ Timeline 14.

⁴¹ Timeline 13.

⁴² Luo Kaiyu 2008:76.

The census numbers from 2 CE⁴³ and 140 CE⁴⁴ show a neat increase of the registered population for Southwest China. Only one area is showing a population decrease in those times: Qianwei commandery, a buffer zone between plain and highlands. The newcomers on their way southward most probably reached Qianwei commandery, but the area functioned like a hub, with large numbers of transiting population remaining invisible in the census.⁴⁵ According to De Crespigny, while in metropolitan areas the figures were more exact, the registered population in frontier areas only represented “those under effective government control, with an unspecified number of non-Chinese people still remaining outside the reach of the government account”.⁴⁶ In intermediary territories such as Qianwei commandery, blurred identities probably led to an even lesser control of non-Han population. Overall, the semi-periphery does not seem to benefit from times of growth for Imperial centres, while both the province and even the far periphery, further south, absorb waves of migrant northerners (Fig.2.2).

commandery	modern location	2 CE		140 CE		population increase
		population	number of counties	population	number of counties	
Qianwei 犍为郡	Sichuan, North Guizhou	489,486	12	448,565	9	- 16%
Zangke 牂柯郡	South Guizhou, Guanxi	153,360	17	267,253	16	174%
Yizhou 益州郡	Yunnan	580,463	24	1,008,146	17	174%
Yuesui 越巂郡	Sichuan	408,405	15	623,418	14	153%

2.2. Population census for the years 2 CE and 140 CE. Source: Timeline 27 and Timeline 34.

In the decades that follow this overall increase in population in the Southwest, the gorges and the region south of the Yangzi in particular receive heavy migration movements from troubled areas in the north of the empire, through neighbouring regions east and west of the gorges’ corridor. Between 140 CE and 154 CE, the Three Gorges area undergo an accelerated demographic growth, with a 70% increase in the

⁴³ Timeline 27.

⁴⁴ Timeline 34.

⁴⁵ Hu Axiang 2010:585.

⁴⁶ De Crespigny 2004:6.

population of Ba commandery, from 155,148 households (circa 543,018 individuals) to 232,697 households (circa 937,768 individuals).⁴⁷

Half a century later (201 CE), when the empire approaches its end, the records of taxable population of the whole Three Gorges area, including Ba commandery, had dropped dramatically to only 34,285 households, thus about 85% less than what it was in the mid-second century CE.⁴⁸ The numbers only start to slowly increase again throughout the Western Jin and Liu Song (420-479 CE) dynasties.

As both the central and regional government weakened, a large portion of the population might have simply not been taxable anymore, but this alone would not explain such an abrupt decline. Part of the settlers abandoned the Yangzi gorges area for several reasons. Men are deported for war campaigns such as Zhu Geliang's towards Jingzhou 荊州 (250 CE), the Hunan-Hubei plain east of the gorges, and arrival of migrants from the gorges is reported in neighbouring regions to the west and south too. Part of these populations might have overflowed into the side valleys, which will constitute the focus of Chapter 5 and 6 in this study.

Numerous uprisings reported in historical sources for the Han period are attributed to the generic entity of the "south-western tribes".⁴⁹ But as seen above, by the late Eastern Han, after half a millennium of migrations, the groups in question already went through a process of acculturation. This shift is perceptible in the archaeological remains of Dian culture, a commonly cited example of non-Han polity active in early imperial Southwest China. In late Dian burials, the hybrid composition of funerary assemblages reflect a process of gradual assimilation by the Han. Pirazzoli is quite pessimistic about the survivance of Dian culture after its brief blossoming in the Western Han period and sees the interaction with Han culture as a generalized transition to Han type tombs.⁵⁰ However, this process of assimilation need not to abruptly come to an end, as suggested by Allard. He sees evidence for incomplete assimilation in man-made caves and vertical pit burials, despite the fact most tombs

⁴⁷ Timeline 35.

⁴⁸ He Shiwei 2011:94-96.

⁴⁹ Bin Yang 2010:104-5 and Allard 2015.

⁵⁰ Pirazzoli 1974:109.

show evidence of sinicization as well as increasingly standardized Han assemblages.⁵¹ As suggested by Yao, “different intensities of contact are reflected in the heterogeneous nature of the evidence documented along the Han Empire’s borderlands”.⁵² Looking at the southern periphery of the Wu kingdom, De Crespigny notes that both native groups and migrants were seeking to maintain their independence from the imperial government. Unlike on the northern frontier, in the southern margins of the empire immigrants and natives had no stark contrast in terms of subsistence, and intermarriage or exchange of customs blurred the limit between the two groups of settlers. Indeed, the two are grouped in historical sources under the same denomination: southern barbarians of the hills (*shanyue* 山越), hill people (*shanmin* 山民), or even hill bandits (*shanzei* 山贼).⁵³ Scholars who engage in the long term cultural history of the Southwest frontier insist on the double-sided process of culture change. For example, Bin Yang uses the denomination *daxing* (大姓) to designate the indigenized descendants of powerful immigrant groups such as exiled officials, and uses the term *yishuai* (夷帥) to designate the sinicized local chieftains used by the Han to rule at a local scale.⁵⁴ I will come back to these groups below, within the specific historical context of imperial collapse.

2.2.4 An alternation of direct and indirect rule⁵⁵ in long-term history

As seen above, the state often follows pre-existing trade routes when dealing with ecological barriers, the establishment of hybrid rule being its answer to cultural boundaries. Precedents for hybrid rule would be the above-mentioned Chu general Zhuang Qiao, who became the first ruler of Dian, or Duo Tong king of Yelang and his princes, who were dubbed prefects of their own kingdom labelled as a Han commandery by Tang Meng. These figures are later systematized by hereditary posts bestowed on members of powerful local families in order to bring border areas under imperial control. At lower levels of administration, bureaucrats locally selected in counties and commanderies defended the frontier, kept peace and collected taxes. Recruiting locals had the advantage for the central government to be inexpensive

⁵¹ Allard 2005:247-9.

⁵² Yao 2008:45.

⁵³ De Crespigny 1990:319.

⁵⁴ Bin Yang 2010:107.

⁵⁵ Other terms proposed by Cowgill to qualify direct and indirect rule are respectively “subjugation” and “incorporation”, or “hegemonic” and “territorial”. Cowgill 1988:265.

compared to garrisons and civil administrators. However, it also meant empowering actors whose contacts with neighbouring Southeast Asian regimes for example, could at times confer a crucial diplomatic role. The peculiar type of administration on the frontier adopted by Han rulers to deal with the problem of negotiating identities evolved in the following millennium.

Most areas surveyed by this study only became apparent in historical documents when they entered the *jimi* 羈縻, a system of frontier administration initiated under the Sui dynasty (581-618 AD).⁵⁶ The term *jimi*, literally “horse bridle” (*ji* 羈) and “ox halter” (*mi* 縻), conveys the idea of being loosely reigned.⁵⁷ The native population of urban and agrarian centres was deported to lightly populated *jimi* areas (*jimi zhou* 羈縻州), where cultural ignorance and the lack of linguistic skills induced local officials to literally create tribes. As a counterpart, bigger centres on the plain or along the Yangzi retained a certain homogeneity. The fact “contributed to the perception of greater ethnic diversity than actually existed. (...) each particular valley or mountain range seems to have been identified with its own distinctive tribe”.⁵⁸ Tang ethnicity was thus constructed upon “geographical and administrative factors external to ethnic identity per se” and made real by the state’s construction of legal and political distinctions between non-Han and Han.⁵⁹ As a result, the *jimi* system under the Tang can be seen as an enterprise in constructing ethnicity. Through frontier systems such as the *jimi*, metropolitan regions become increasingly uniform, and frontier regions increasingly mixed, the latter functioning like a belt of communication. The situation only intensifies under the *tusi* 土司 system, which translates as “native officials”, initiated under the Northern Song (960–1126 CE).⁶⁰ A progressive hardening of views on ethnic difference is caused by local administration on the frontier being composed exclusively by military officers and people with no position at court.⁶¹ A look at later gazetteers (7th to 12th centuries CE) on the tributaries south of the Yangzi shows that these

⁵⁶ Allard 2015:34.

⁵⁷ Pelliot 1904:140.

⁵⁸ Abramson 2011:125.

⁵⁹ Abramson 2011:124.

⁶⁰ Recent archaeological survey of 3 major *tusi* seats in remote mountaineous locations of modern Guizhou, Hubei and Hunan provinces, revealed fortified settlements in quarried stone enclosures with attached beacon towers, farms and cemeteries. Personal communication from professor Li Meitian, Renmin University of China archaeology department.

⁶¹ Abramson 2011:125.

oscillate constantly between being formally recorded as direct counties of the empire or as native chieftaincies under indirect imperial rule. Between the Yuan (1261-1378 CE) and Ming (1368-1644 CE) dynasties, the native chieftain *tusi* system of indirect rule was eventually replaced by a system of direct rule and a frontier policy coined “return of the land” (*gaitu guiliu* 改土歸流), which led to large-scale deportation and brought to an end the rule of native chieftaincies.⁶² Actual colonization only begins in the Ming period with the *gaitu guiliu* policy, when “land-hungry farmers, exiled officials, profit-driven merchants” settle in the highlands.⁶³

The succession of indirect rule systems has led some scholars to claim that the area was not successfully colonised for more than 1000 years, between the Han invasion in 135 BCE and the Mongol Invasion in 1330 CE. This “very long process of middle ground”⁶⁴ in the history of the Southwest, is far less violent, rapid and radical than the American western frontier, the latter being a common reference for frontier studies.⁶⁵ Rather than a situation of constant rebellion, the situation in the Southwest shows stability and resilience, as well as flexibility in coexistence to more rigid forms of authority.⁶⁶ Routes and nodes in the route network connecting the Sichuan plain to the Yangzi gorges and highlands are re-ranked as historical circumstances change, and administrative units are re-drawn.⁶⁷ The highlands do not beat at the same rhythm as the metropolitan time of the Han Empire and the successive dynasties, which had a more or less important presence on the frontier. Time is not limited to the imperial, linear progress of history, conquest and gradual assimilation. Similarly, space is not limited to the Chengdu plain-centred narrative but consists in a triangular relation between the Sichuan basin, the Yangzi gorges and the Yunnan-Guizhou highlands. The approach adopted by this research to develop a history of the highlands is to investigate the relation between Han cliff tombs (Type 1) and diverging types of burials

⁶² Under Qing emperor Yongzheng (1678-1735), all native chieftains *tusi* are replaced by rotating imperial bureaucrats. Giersch 2006:72 and Hostettler 2001:117-9.

⁶³ Bin Yang 2009:141.

⁶⁴ Bin Yang 2009:174.

⁶⁵ Turner 1938:185-6. A better comparison would be the Roman imperial frontier. In the so-called European framework, the genesis of frontiers is described as follows: frontiers emerge in relation to a centre, more densely populated, which concentrates wealth and power. The relation between centre and frontier is a mutually structuring one, and the frontier becomes a place where previously separated populations meet. Rodseth and Parker 2005.

⁶⁶ Crumley 2006:386-8.

⁶⁷ Administrative boundaries run north-south when the invasive authority comes from the north like in the Western Han, Tang or Northern Song period. They run east-west and follow the Yangzi river course under the rule of medieval Jiankang (modern Nanjing), capital of the Southern Dynasties, or later on, when the Mongols borrow this corridor to access the south-east plain.

in artificial caves produced south of the Yangzi (Type 2), focusing on the locational strategies adopted by each type of cemeteries.

2.3 “Han times”: Causes and consequences of imperial collapse

Dated inscriptions, for which a detailed analysis is provided in Chapter 7, are attached to burial caves and provide a temporal window for the study of funerary traditions in Southwest China. Early rock-cut burials are found in the Sichuan basin, a fertile and wealthy province of the empire, and the practice subsequently spreads in the Yangzi gorges area, a major industrial and trade hub. Epigraphic evidence uncovered in Type 2 cemeteries is dated to the 170-180s CE down to the 3rd century CE, and the caves are located in remote valleys south of the Yangzi. As we will see below, this decade coincides with uprisings of various groups culminating in 184 CE,⁶⁸ and concluding with the sack of the imperial capital Luoyang in 191 CE.⁶⁹ Main civilizational centres and circulation axis, such as the Sichuan basin and the main course of the Yangzi, underwent a period of crisis and transition leading to the end of the Eastern Han Empire. At the time of imperial collapse, remote locations which played an indirect role in imperial history started investing their resources, time and effort in monumental tombs. After dated cliff burials are not found any more in the Yangzi gorges, caves south of the Yangzi continue to be produced for at least for another 30 years.⁷⁰ Here, the custom of inscribing tombs and erecting ostentatious funerary monuments seems to have outlived the Han.

This section reviews available studies on the collapse of empires, their possible application to the last decade of the Eastern Han dynasty and identifies the agents of collapse: socio-cultural groups inhabiting the borderland south of the Yangzi. This historical review will be completed in Chapter 4 with contextual data from the archaeological record of the Three Gorges area.

⁶⁸ Espesset 2009:24. Timeline 43 to 47.

⁶⁹ De Crespigny 2004.Vol.1:83-4.

⁷⁰ Instead, historical documents show that tombs are increasingly discreet due to fears for looting. Timeline 50.

2.3.1 Territorial fragmentation and the beneficiaries of collapse

The collapse of complex polities has been the focus of comparative studies, leading to definitions that can be applied to the Eastern Han case. Middleton groups the characteristics of collapse in three levels: territorial administration, the organization of society, and material culture.⁷¹ Definitions of collapse mention a regression of the collapsing polity to a lower level of complexity, characterized by its “rapidity (thereby different from weakening or decline), taking no more than a few decades, with a substantial loss of socio-political structure”.⁷² Political factors for de-centralization and fragmentation include: overtaxing, local intermediaries gaining power, taxes not reaching the centre, overexploitation leading to environmental disaster, political fragmentation, inefficient bureaucracy, manorialism and fragmentation of territorial administration, mass migrations leading to both loss of population and overpopulation, shift from rotating provincial officials to hereditary functions and the rise of local powerful families, and the rebellion of native groups or “barbarians”. To the groups which take profit from collapse, Eisenstadt adds what he calls “antisystem” entities, often backed by an alternative ideology or religion.⁷³ In the Eastern Han case, some recognized factors of collapse coincide with the list of factors mentioned above.

Historical sources referring to Han period Sichuan seem to confirm the idea that collapse is marked by “a drastic decrease in human population size (...) over a considerable area, for an extended time”.⁷⁴ While under Western Han rule, administrative divisions (province *jun* 郡, county *xian* 县 and district *qu* 区) were less numerous and more extended, with usually no more than 10 counties per commandery, Eastern Han commanderies were fragmented into smaller units, with a dramatic augmentation of the number of counties. After the fall of the empire, a period referred to as the Three Kingdoms, Southwest China was ruled by the kingdom of Shu (221-263 CE; hereafter referred to as Shu Han 蜀漢 to differentiate it from the Shu polity from pre-imperial times). Under Shu Han, the number of counties kept augmenting. This fragmentation meant a growth and complexification of the bureaucratic body, but it did not solely speak of collapse or decline. As we will see, it

⁷¹ Middleton 2008:55-58.

⁷² Based on Tainter 1988:19-20.

⁷³ The “Stoic resistance” or emergent Christian communities in Imperial Rome are examples of antisystem entities. Eisenstadt 1988:241.

⁷⁴ Diamond 2005:3.

also corresponded to a deepening of the settled area into secondary parts of the Yangzi river system. Basing himself on Wittfogel's correlation between empires and water management, Kimura classified all counties reported in the Han Shu in 2 categories: "old" and "new" counties.⁷⁵ Old counties stand for land that was originally suitable for agriculture (avoiding floodable riverbanks, on raised platforms, hilltops or mountain feet), while new counties are the ones that established themselves on the land made safer, accessible and arable by large-scale water management works. Kimura considers "new counties" as being more sensitive to political unrest, and locates most peasant rebellions occurring at the fall of the Han in such counties.

Collapse theory distinguishes between different types of relationships to the land, from the points of view of both cultivators and the imperial authority, a fact which will remain important throughout our effort in defining the type of territories occupied respectively by Type 1 and Type 2 cliff tombs. Below, we look at innovative forms of ownership and land management particular to Sichuan in late Eastern Han organized by powerful families, religious movements or native groups.

2.3.2 Local officials and powerful families: Refugees, civilizers and chieftains

In the growing turmoil of the late 2nd century CE, the governmental military presence south of the Yangzi was reduced to a minimum, usually replaced by "groups of people, Chinese or non-Chinese, (...) banding together for mutual protection",⁷⁶ with the family or clan as basic unit – enlarged in the case of landed families by clients, retainers and dependents who were bound by relations of rent and usury. The ruling members of these powerful groupings had access to education and governmental office, thanks to the support from local imperial officials eager to secure their local alliances. Local gentry and the imperial administration were thus in intimate collaboration, to the detriment of central authorities. In 178 CE, a market for the sale of offices was opened in the imperial capital.⁷⁷ The traffic gradually increased and was extended to the whole official system in 185 CE, provoking gross corruption and extortion at the local level.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Kimura 1965.

⁷⁶ De Crespigny 2004:56. De Crespigny cites Hsu Cho-yun's translation of the *Si min yueling*, mentioning security measures against bandits taken by the families or clans in times of famine. The families possessed weapons and practiced military skills (Hsu Cho-yun 1980:220 and 225). See also Xuan Chen 2015:18 about private armies organized by the *daxing* in Eastern Han Sichuan.

⁷⁷ Timeline 49.

⁷⁸ De Crespigny 1989. Vol 2:517-8.

In the north, where most deportations are linked with the construction of new capitals, the departure of powerful families caused the power balance between the Han administration and frontier populations to change, resulting in a further increase of southward migrations. Two million people relocating in the South in the years 290-307 CE allowed the expansion of steppe population in areas previously occupied by agriculturalist settlers.⁷⁹ The aristocratic families who migrated south, although deprived from support from the countryside, maintained a fictive status. Despite the fact that, unlike local powerful families, they lacked land and support, northern émigrés constituted a great part of the southern administration too.⁸⁰ As government officials acting in their own interest started creating landed estates and accumulating properties, the local literati class gradually transformed into local lords with private armies.⁸¹ When the government collapsed after the death of Emperor Ling in 189 CE, these groups originally meant for mutual defence were ready to take part in civil war.⁸²

An important component of the powerful clans discussed above were the “great families” (*daxing* 大姓).⁸³ These families migrated southwards from the Qin period onwards and became involved in industrial and mercantile activities such as extraction or agriculture upon their arrival in the gorges and the Sichuan basin. They owned large estates and maintained private armies, in ambiguous relation with local administrations. Family names associated with the *daxing* can be traced back to all parts of the empire, and the monumental ensembles of rock-cut tombs along the major waterways of the Sichuan basin, such as Santai, Pengshan, Leshan, have been associated with these groups.⁸⁴ Their innovative and publicised familial model is supposed to have emulated the subsequent wider popularity of smaller cliff tombs ensembles in the area. Perceptions of the *daxing* in historical documents are mixed. They are alternatively presented as a vehicle for sinicisation and progress, as they helped to protect Han frontiers and presented gifts to the government, or cited along seven forms of disasters for the people, whenever their power turned against the State.⁸⁵ The role of the *daxing* settled in Han civilizational centres differs from those

⁷⁹ Hu Axiang 2010:590.

⁸⁰ Crowell 1990: 204.

⁸¹ Hsu Cho-yun 1988.

⁸² De Crespigny 2004:57.

⁸³ Timeline 23.

⁸⁴ Chen Xuan 2015:12-14 and 17-20.

⁸⁵ Timeline 17.

located in border areas. The latter were involved in frontier administration and the control of local populations than in industrial or agricultural activities.⁸⁶ The *daxing* from Nanzhong, through a form of intermarriage with local populations designated in historical accounts by the term *huangye* 遑耶, are said to have evolved into local chieftains, designated by the term *yishuai* 夷帥.⁸⁷ In 223 CE, they had already lost all contact with the Shu Han government, successor of the Eastern Han, a major trigger for the campaign of Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 in 225 CE. The *daxing* and *yishuai* from Nanzhong subsequently formed the “hundred barbarians” (*baiman* 百蠻), who in the centuries following the collapse of the Han Empire will form the independent kingdom of Nanzhao 南詔 (738-937 CE) and rule over the Southwest.

2.3.3 Religious sects and south-western tribes

Religious communities active in Southwest China in the 2nd-3rd centuries CE sometimes replaced the lowest level of local administration, sharing the scene with powerful clans.⁸⁸ The best documented of these movements is probably the Celestial Masters sect (*tianshi dao* 天師道; also called “five pecks of rice” *wudoumi* 五斗米).⁸⁹ The sect was not an isolated example, with the Yellow Turbans (*huangshi* 黃巾) rebelling in the same area at a couple of years of interval, among others.⁹⁰ The Celestial masters expressed themselves in messianic terms: “Come quickly and join me (...) and you will be saved from danger (...) The people are suffering, and illness is at its extreme. The starving is everywhere. I will change destiny. I will shake the reign of the Han.”⁹¹ They founded a theocracy in 190 CE, which cut Sichuan from the rest of the empire.⁹² They designed a parallel administration structured in dioceses which, apart from imposing a rice tax and practicing census, apparently also exploited its followers for road-building.⁹³ To establish the seats of the dioceses, they seem to have “selected sites in the borderland where mountainous areas met the plain, preferably at the

⁸⁶ Fang Tie 2003:158.

⁸⁷ Timeline 54.

⁸⁸ Kleeman 1998:87-88.

⁸⁹ Timeline 43.

⁹⁰ Kleeman 1998:80.

⁹¹ Translated by Ownby 1999:1521 from the Classic of the Transformations of Laozi (*Laozi bianhua jing* 老子變化經), a text produced by a religious group active in Sichuan contemporaneous to the Zhang family, who initiated the Celestial Masters movement. See also Seidel 1969.

⁹² De Crespigny 1990:2.

⁹³ Timeline 44.

mouth of a river or on a communicating road”.⁹⁴ The years 183-184 CE⁹⁵ and 188 CE⁹⁶ up to 217 CE⁹⁷ see their growing influence and their organization as proper armies, with the support of the peasant mass as well as non-Chinese groups.

While transforming local geographies, the sects created alternative cultural alliances, including native populations. Kleeman argues that the main characteristic of the territory ruled by the spiritual leader Zhang Lu in the early 3rd century CE, was its strong non-Chinese ethnic component.⁹⁸ He points out accounts of mass conversions among the Ba of Eastern Sichuan, with local leaders converting with their entire communities of several hundred families at once.⁹⁹ Conversely, the indigenous beliefs of the significant number of its non-Chinese followers influenced the incipient stages of this religious tradition.¹⁰⁰ Kleeman also suggests that among the army at the service of the theocracy, was a group associated with the Ba, the *Banshun man* 板楯蠻 (lit. “board-shield barbarians”).¹⁰¹ The Banshun used to be allied with the Han against the Qiang.¹⁰² They were not heavily taxed by the Han, but they contributed a heavy labour corvée, especially for road-building projects.¹⁰³ Perhaps for that reason, uprisings by these mercenaries in the late second century AD were regarded by the central government as just a matter of incompetent administration, with no cause for a military campaign.

As we can see from the Banshun case, the role of native groups is not univocal. They by turns built alliances with the Han, adhered to millennial sects, and defended their own cause throughout early imperial history, protesting against high taxes and forced

⁹⁴ Verellen 2003:49. Verellen has attempted to map the dioceses in the Sichuan basin, matching their locations with archaeological finds. He concludes that most sites are located in areas of intensive rice cultivation in irrigated lowlands, with the highest concentration to the northeast of Chengdu. Temples or seats of the dioceses, instead, are located in mountainous areas.

⁹⁵ Timeline 45 and 46.

⁹⁶ Timeline 47.

⁹⁷ Timeline 51.

⁹⁸ Kleeman 2002:25. The “south-western barbarians” consulted officials (libationers) of the Yellow Turban movement, but Lévy points at one source where the spiritual leader Zhang Lu, is reported having used derogatory terms to designate the south-western tribes such as “demon people” (*guimin* 鬼民). Lévy 1956:217.

⁹⁹ Kleeman 2002:27.

¹⁰⁰ Kleeman 2002:35.

¹⁰¹ Kleeman 1998:74.

¹⁰² Timeline 48.

¹⁰³ Bin Yang 2009:104-5.

labour. Rebellions by non-Han groups against imperial administration are thus not only associated with the decline of Han rule.¹⁰⁴

2.3.4 Limits of the collapse paradigm

As we can see from the above-mentioned examples, apart from the middle-income descendants of Han immigrants settled in the Sichuan basin, who formed an important social group tied in client-like relationships with the wealthier families of landowners, other groups were active on the frontier in the late 2nd to early 3rd centuries CE. They adopted new religious beliefs, sometimes evolving into theocratic polities or formed inter-ethnic alliances and sustaining themselves by special tax status and corvée. These often short-lived communities were both the agents and the product of the collapse of civilizational centres in peripheral areas.

The eventful last decades of the 2nd century CE adds to the longer term picture of inter group interaction in the Southwest, and allowed us to zoom in to sub-regional interests, but some distance is to be kept. The narrative of collapse proved helpful to capture local dynamics, but, just like colonization, it forces the evidence into a linear evolution. Widely applied to states and empires, biological metaphors of evolution such as those of rise, maturity and decline have been recognized to oversimplify the mechanisms of collapse.¹⁰⁵ From the point of view of local organizations, often more stable than the central structures of authority, total collapse appears as an illusion, and degrees of continuity persist. Even from the point of view of the collapsing polity, the failure of a state is not equivalent to the end of a civilization.¹⁰⁶ The territories south of the Yangzi were mainly a subsistence economy. For this reason, the administrative structure of the region remained quite stable and conservative, supervising settlements rather than encouraging expansion. When the empire collapsed and North China was for several centuries under the political and military power of the steppe, colonized areas in the South turned into the guardians of Han tradition.¹⁰⁷ The incoming settlers south of the Yangzi were subjects of the empire seeking their fortunes far from the northern invaders and the powerful families of the

¹⁰⁴ Five major rebellions by the south-western tribes, often associated with newly settled Han groups, are reported from 86 BC to 118 CE. Timeline 36 to 40.

¹⁰⁵ Yoffee 2005:132.

¹⁰⁶ Kaufman 1988:234.

¹⁰⁷ Holcombe 1994.

capital. Although carrying the language and culture of the empire, their society was, by the end of the Later Han, already politically independent. The idea of a major stability on the periphery than in the centre is useful here as it makes the appearance of a tradition of monumental burials in remote areas less surprising.

2.4 “Han tombs”: The study of Eastern Han cliff tombs in Southwest China and the wider practice of over ground burials on riverside cliffs (cliff burials)

2.4.1 Historiography: from barbarian dwellings to Han cliff tombs

A review of the historiography of the topic is useful at this point. Ethnographic descriptions of elevated burials in riverside cliffs can be traced back to medieval (6th to 10th century CE) accounts by local administrators or travellers.¹⁰⁸ Early western travellers to the area such as Wylie (1815-1887), Von Richthofen (1833-1905) and Baber (1843-1890), were confronted with the popular designation of cliff tombs: “barbarian or aboriginal caves” (*manzi dong* 蠻子洞) or “caves of the Lao people” (*Lao dong* 僚洞).¹⁰⁹ They reported the popular belief that rock-cut caves were rather recent dwellings of aboriginal people,¹¹⁰ a belief that corresponded to the information on the area provided by Qing period gazetteers, and that was echoed in some Yi chiefs’ territorial claims. Such interpretations lost credibility with the works of anthropologist Torii (1870-1953) and missionary Torrance (1871-1959).¹¹¹ Both attributed the caves to Han people, based on typological comparisons with Eastern Han tombs located in other areas, grave goods including Chinese coins, and the presence of Chinese language inscriptions. The final word on this controversy was given by David Crockett Graham (1884-1961), who officially asserted their belonging to Han civilization within the newly created Chinese

¹⁰⁸ The earliest ethnographic description of cliff burial is dated late Tang. Timeline 60.

¹⁰⁹ Other popular names for the rock caves include “carpenter Luban’s cave” (*Luban dong* 鲁班洞), “immortals’ caves” (*xianren dong* 仙人洞), as well as “ancestors’ caves” (*xianren dong* 先人洞). The latter denomination might be a form of identification with the burial custom by a neighbouring branch of the Gelao. in Zunyi 1984:50. During survey in western Hunan, I have noticed one previously unheard denomination: “skin-sloughing cave” (*tuopi dong* 脫皮洞). The locals claimed that dying old people used to be led to the caves, where one would then only find a dried skin but no body.

¹¹⁰ Wylie 1869:169.

¹¹¹ Torrance wonders: “One thing remains inexplicable. How is it that the people do not know that these caves are the tombs of ancient Chinese? Perhaps the ruthless exterminating campaign of Chang-hsien-chong at the close of the Ming dynasty explains it. The province was then almost depopulated, and had to be re-peopled from settlers from other parts of China. And they, coming as strangers, naturally knew nothing of the local history of the place. Some day I hope to say something about the caves on the Southern half of the Min.” Torrance 2016:42.

academic environment.¹¹² As sharply noted by Kyong-McClain, it is in the context of elaboration of a Chinese national identity that the then new discipline of archaeology labelled the caves as “Han tombs”, abandoning the care “to differentiate between Han as an era and Han as a people group”.¹¹³ The term “Han tomb” was extended to all rock-cut caves in Sichuan, regardless of local distinctions, and glossing over the question of the identity of their makers and their function.

Once the topic was appropriated by historical archaeology, rock-cut monuments datable to the Eastern Han period were deemed too sophisticated to be the result of aboriginal endeavours and were attributed to the civilising presence of Han in Southwest China. Hence, anthropologist Chen Mingfang, in the earliest comprehensive work on the practice of over ground burials on riverside cliffs (hereafter called “cliff burials” *yazang* 崖葬) in South China, restricted her focus on both prehistoric populations and modern ethnography. She declared that the 2nd to 3rd centuries caves are “Han” and come under the historian’s responsibility, rather than the archaeologist’s.¹¹⁴ Because the progress of modern archaeology in China was associated with nation-building, relating “Han cliff tombs” to alternative funerary ideologies and practices sounded like going backwards to pre-Republican or pre-scientific conceptions listed above. Establishing relations between Han cliff tombs and cliff burials in general is today still discouraged by disciplinary boundaries. Indeed, the term “cliff burial” is problematic because it covers a variety of riverside burial practices, and because it extends across a huge temporal and spatial area. Tong Enzheng proposed cliff burials, which wide distribution is comparable to that of bronze drums, as one of the indicators of the relation between Southwest China and Southeast Asia.¹¹⁵ Pan-Asian comparisons were subsequently discouraged for fear of accusations of diffusionism.

Ethnonyms associated with cliff tombs south of the Yangzi such as the Bo 僂, the Lao 僚, or wider families of ethnic groups such as the Pu 濮, the Yue 越, can all be included in the wider denomination “south-western barbarians”. Such attributions have led to strong claims in the context of nation-building and the writing of national histories in

¹¹² Graham 1932. A similar exercise of demystification was led for the stone sarcophagi of Eastern Han Sichuan. see Elsner and Wu Hung 2012:13-15.

¹¹³ Kyong-McClain 2010:5.

¹¹⁴ Chen Mingfang 1992:134.

¹¹⁵ Tong Enzheng 1983:307-329.

Southeast Asia.¹¹⁶ The denomination Bo is comparable to the Qiang discussed above, as they acted as cultural intermediaries or the fuzzy “other” formative stage of the Han Empire. Lao is an ethnonym often associated with cliff burials, together with the Gelao 仡佬 and the Wuximan 五溪蠻. The Lao enter the stage of history between the collapse of the Han and the Tang-Song transition (3rd to 8th century CE), a moment of resurgence for highland communities. Again, the ethnonym Lao is more of a blanket-term that came to designate all non-Han people in Sichuan under the Song.¹¹⁷

2.4.2 “Non-Han” cliff tombs: an opportunity for transhistorical comparisons

The “cliff burial” type of funerary practice – i.e. using riverside cliffs in canyons to implant clusters of individual burials placed high above ground, with no closure or concealing of the coffin – had been used in the area at several moments in history. If one wants to exit linear Imperial history and a hierarchized geography where caves south of the Yangzi are but a peripheral version of a regional version of a “Han tomb”, then the wider context of cliff burial should be addressed.

Based on an overview of the literature on all elevated burials in riverside cliffs which do not fit the rather restrictive category of “Han cliff tombs”,¹¹⁸ as well as observations drawn from my own survey, I distinguished three groups in cliff burial practices:

1. Burials in both natural and man-made caves which involve coffins made out of hollowed tree trunks, also known as “boat-coffins”, date back to the end of the Bronze Age.¹¹⁹ In the archaeological record of pre-Imperial Sichuan, Thote looks at mechanisms of mixing and perpetuation and distinguishes between artefacts made in Sichuan, imports, local imitations of imports and revivals. Among funerary practices, he lists cist burials for western Sichuan, as well as shaft

¹¹⁶ The Lao, Gelao and Ai-Lao ancestry has been revendicated since the Nanzhao kings down to modern Thailand and Laos. A controverted topic, dominated by popular interpretations: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/print/297670/> . (last accessed 26/6/2017)

¹¹⁷ Von Glahn 1987:20-24.

¹¹⁸ Elevated burials in riverside cliffs are referred to in the literature as “cliff burials” (*yazang* 崖葬 or *yanmu* 岩墓), “burials in boat-shaped coffins” (*chuanguanzang* 船棺葬), or “burials in suspended coffins” (*xuanguanzang* 懸棺葬). Studies on cliff burials started in the early 80s, with a first conference on “burials in suspended coffins” in 1980 (Xuanguanzang 1980), with an appendix listing 155 descriptions in historical texts of all periods for cliff burials by province, and the publication of a special issue of *Minzu* on the topic in 1981 (Xuanguanzang 1981), with a table in appendix listing 83 cliff burial sites. No comparable enthusiasm for the topic is found in the last decades, in the Three Gorges collection of reports, mostly summaries of previous finds with some updates are given on this group of burial practices (Wu Chunming and Wang Wei in Three Gorges 2003:249-253; Three Gorges 2009:344-345).

¹¹⁹ Further detail on dating is given in Chapter 4.

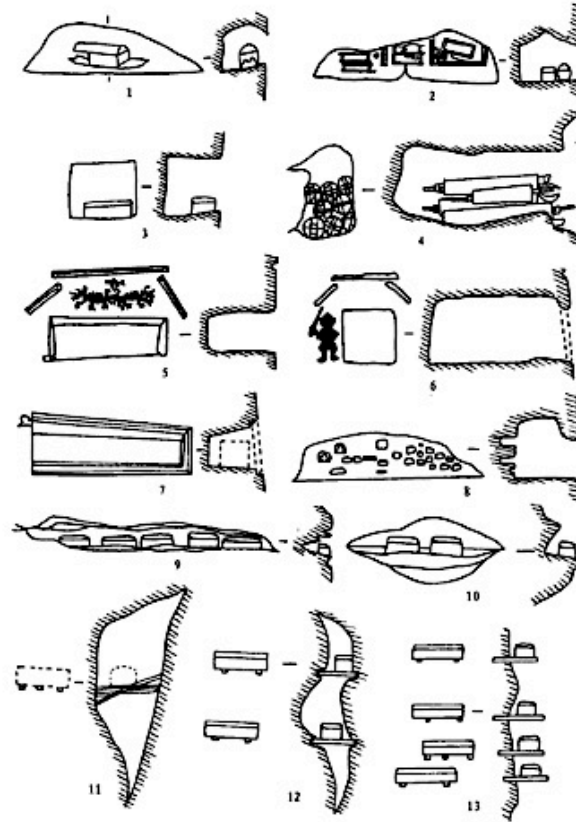
tombs with inner and outer coffins (*guan* 棺 and *guo* 槨) and boat-coffin burials in hollowed tree trunks. To him, “the most original expression of Ba-Shu material culture (...) is to be found not at either of these two sites but a third, distinct culture, that of the boat-coffin burials and their furnishings”.¹²⁰

2. Burials in artificial caves south of the Yangzi that can be dated to Han times but do not fully correspond to the model of Han tombs. Avoided by historical archaeology for the reasons detailed in the previous subsection, these are either considered as a bad copy of a Han tomb, or attributed to a much later period. These are the caves the present study focused on.
3. Burials in artificial caves south of the Yangzi which belong to later periods, between the Southern Dynasties and the Ming (5th to 16th centuries CE). These are systematically attributed to ethno-national groups or ethnic minorities (*minzu* 民族). The systematic attribution of later cliff tombs to non-Han groups shows the confusion between “Han period tombs” and “tombs of Han people”. “Ethnic minorities cliff tombs” (*minzu yamu* 民族崖墓), or “non-Han cliff tombs” (*fei hanxi yamu* 非漢系崖墓)” are the terms used by Luo Kaiyu, who wavers between a northern and an eastern origin for such cliff tombs.¹²¹ According to the northern origin hypothesis, the cliff tombs are deriving from the megalithic burials (大石墓) on the Himalayan highlands bordering Sichuan on its western and northern edges. Diffusing down the Min River and its tributaries towards southern Sichuan, these northern groups started using stone cist burials, then ended up using stone coffins and rock-cut burials. Here, the use of stone provides the only connection between these three distinct burial practices. According to the eastern origin hypothesis, groups inhabiting the Three Gorges who practiced cliff burials in natural or man-made caves since the Bronze Age, brought along their practice when they entered Sichuan in Eastern Han times.

The following figure shows Song and Ming period cliff tombs located south of Yibin in no.5 and no.6, along with different categories of cliff burials, from the Neolithic examples in Fujian no.1 to the Ming examples in southern Sichuan no.13 (**Fig.2.3**).

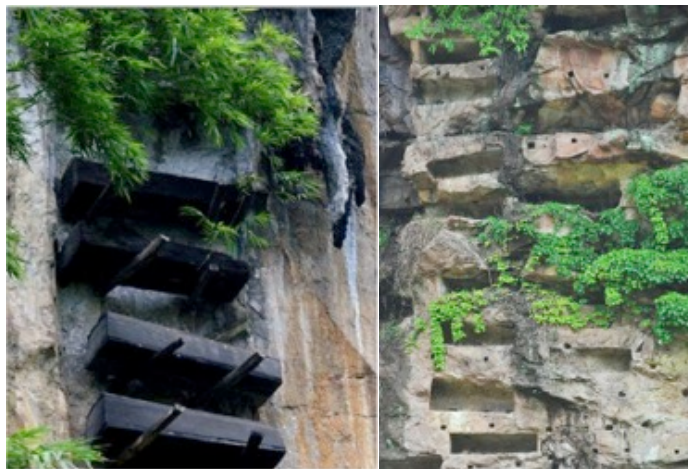
¹²⁰ Thote 2001:203-210.

¹²¹ Luo Kaiyu 2008.



2.3. Classification of cliff burials after Wu Chunming. Source: Wu Chunming 1999:316.

Some of these practices involved corpse exposure or sky burial, and secondary burial or reburial. Among these, wooden coffins placed on beams secured to the cliff face, known as “suspended coffins” (*xuanguan zang* 悬棺葬), and wooden coffins stored in man-made caves fit the comparison with Han cliff tombs south of the Yangzi, because of their highly visible position on riverside cliffs, and the logistical effort they involve (Fig.2.4).



2.4. Suspended wooden coffins on horizontal beams secured to the cliff face, and man-made caves that may have contained similar coffins. Estimated to date from the 17th century.

For comparative purposes, my survey includes several ensembles of later burials in artificial caves south of the Yangzi: Tang-Song (7th to 12th century CE) burials along the Long River and south of the Luzhou plain. The rock-cut horizontal niches in the Long River were attributed to the “Barbarians of the Five Streams” (*Wuxi man* 五溪蠻),¹²² while the caves in Luzhou are reported as “ethnic minorities cliff tombs”. In fact, the latter feature guardians carved on both sides of the tomb entrance no different from themes found in contemporaneous assembled stone tombs of the Sichuan basin.¹²³

In the light of preliminary survey, I propose that the group of burial practices designated by the term “cliff burial” (*yazang* 崖葬), rooted in the Yangzi gorges area since at least the late Bronze age and practiced until modern times, provides an alternative to ground burial as practiced in Han tombs. However, to avoid forced attributions to an exotic “other”, the comparison with Han tombs should be based on their respective historical contexts, taking into account the function of burials within a specific cultural configuration, the selection of locations with regards to the cultural geography of the times investigated, and the role and identity of the communities involved in cave-making. This goes beyond the scope of this thesis, but opens the way to further investigation.

2.4.3 Type 1: Cliff tombs in the Sichuan basin and Yangzi gorges

Cliff tombs in Southwest China are currently understood as a regional phenomenon taking part in the wider reformulation of funerary practices happening in the Han period (3rd century BCE to 3rd century CE). The deceased, who used to be disposed in a wooden coffin buried in a vertical pit (shaft tomb), was now placed in a stone or brick chamber modelled on dwellings of the living (horizontal tombs).¹²⁴

¹²² Wang Yu 2004.

¹²³ See section 11.6.8.1 in .appendix to Chapter 8 : Catalogue of depictions.

¹²⁴ In Wu Hung’s synthesis on Chinese funerary art, *The Art of the Yellow Springs: Understanding Chinese Tombs*, the vertical pit grave or shaft tomb is translated as “casket grave” (*guo mu* 槨墓), and its transition to the “chamber grave” (*shi mu* 室墓) or horizontal tomb is understood as “a shift in tomb planning from an “object-oriented” to a “space-oriented” design”. (Wu Hung 2011:33). No image of a paradise or a structured notion of the afterlife did figure in such confined spaces, “happy homes” which were organized for the deceased to reside in. The space of the tomb, however, responds to some ritual, architectural and iconographic structuring principles: “Spaces, objects and images work together to evoke various temporalities such as past, future or eternity, and to generate a sense of movement inside a sealed space” (Wu Hung 2011:15).

Rock-cut chambers hollowed in natural mountains were first experimented with by members of the Liu family in the Western Han period (206 BCE to 8 CE) in north-eastern and eastern China.¹²⁵ Along with the Western Han brick chambers, these brought about a revolution in the design of funerary spaces, characterized by long access alleys leading to horizontal corridors with chambers aligned on both sides. Such chambers are thought to correspond to a shift in religious practices and beliefs about the afterlife, and have been interpreted by some as a foreign influence on Chinese tomb design.¹²⁶ More recently, it is their function as a political statement and a tool to consolidate social hierarchies and alliances that has retained scholarly attention. Rather than looking for a religious motivation behind the use of rock-cut tombs, Miller insists on the role of mountains both playing a strategic role as part of the Han king's territory, and acting as a symbol of permanence of the Liu clan.¹²⁷ She calls for increased attention to the tombs' agency in structuring the society of the living and legitimizing their power, which in the Western Han case revolves around the needs of the Liu clan for consolidation. Miller argues that elite rock-cut tombs were not representative of Han society as a whole, as the majority of the population was not buried in house-like tombs.¹²⁸

However, most studies on Han tombs consider that the concomitant emergence of a new design for high status funerary spaces and a new social function for these spaces served as a model for lesser forms of chamber burials in general, built in brick or assembled stones throughout the empire.¹²⁹ Funerary practices would thus follow a "downward process of diffusion" from metropolitan to provincial centres.¹³⁰ Thorp describes this scale-down shift in burial practices according to both social hierarchy and imperial geography: "objects first reported from tombs of the early and middle Han nobility are noted in the tombs of local elite by the end of middle Han...again and again

¹²⁵ The most often-cited one is the tomb of Liu Sheng and his consort at Mancheng, Hebei. For a complete list of elite rock-cut tombs, see Miller 2011:302.

¹²⁶ External influence was suggested to explain the suddenness of the phenomenon, from potential connections with South and Western Asia, although no direct evidence of such influence is available as yet. Wu Hung proposes Indian rock-cut temples as a prototype for the Western Han examples (Wu Hung 1995:133), while Rawson pointed at 6th century BC examples such as the rock-cut tomb of Darius I. (Rawson 1999:24). To Chen Xuan, a "conceptual influence" is plausible, but most pictorial choices to be related to local architecture rather than foreign models (Chen Xuan 2015:26). Miller, opposing the idea of rock-cut tombs being an import, looks for antecedents in ancient China (Miller 2011:302).

¹²⁷ Miller 2015:28-9.

¹²⁸ Miller 2011:32.

¹²⁹ Rawson 1999:9. Erickson similarly considers tombs such as Liu Sheng's to have initiated the idea of the tomb replicating the palace environment of the living king, and to have served as a prototype for rock-cut tombs in Sichuan (Erickson 2006:405).

¹³⁰ Thorp 1979:250.

one can trace the demise of local traditions of tomb structure and furnishings, (...) and the rise of forms modelled after those of the North".¹³¹ To him, the resulting standardized practice of Middle Han tombs, despite local innovations in the use of materials such as ashlar masonry and rock-cut cliff tombs, is an impoverishment that shows repetitive clichés divorced from the art of the time and devoid of experimentation.¹³² Focusing on the context of mass production for assembled stone chambers, Powers proposed a reconstruction of quarrying, processing and distribution networks of decorated stone slabs in the Central Plains.¹³³ His analysis of funerary imagery as a specific type of production identifies the actors involved in the production process, particularly the stone mason, an essential link between patron and audience. More recently, Barbieri-Low's study on artisans in early imperial China reconstructed a social history of stone masons in Eastern Han.¹³⁴ These studies constitute a precedent for the study of rock-cut caves in the Sichuan region, where the carvings were not anymore realized on stone slabs to be quarried, decorated, assembled, and eventually buried, but directly on open-air cliff faces.

The availability and workability of raw material, sandstone cliffs, and the existence of specific social needs favoured the sudden spread and popularity of rock-cut tombs in the Sichuan basin (1st to 2nd century CE). In Eastern Han Sichuan, rock-cut chambers were used along with brick-built chambers, while burial chambers assembled in quarried stones, found elsewhere in the empire, were generally absent. The extent and variety of Sichuanese rock-cut tombs witness the changing agency of such burials in Eastern Han times as compared to their Western Han antecedents. Eastern Han rock-cut tombs are not directly associated with political power, and they allow successive generations to continue visiting and editing the funerary space. While Western Han funerary practices emphasize official career against elaborate mourning rites, under the Eastern Han personal obligations are elevated above state duties. Eastern Han funerary practices show strong preference for the personal over the universal, emphasizing interpersonal relations,¹³⁵ with an emphasis on display,

¹³¹ Thorp 1979:254.

¹³² Thorp 1979:257. According to Thorp, artistic achievements are encountered in the couple of centuries of experimentation preceding the establishment of a standard, and more likely to happen near metropolitan centres.

¹³³ Chapter 3 in Powers 1991.

¹³⁴ Barbieri-Low 2007.

¹³⁵ Brashier 2011:64.

developing a new visibility in mourning practices.¹³⁶ In an area centred on the Chengdu plain, centuries of immigration from other regions of the empire led to a provincial context dominated by a local elite of powerful families who owned large estates and hired landless tenant farmers.¹³⁷ To Chen Xuan, who underlines the importance of these powerful families in the development of the region, not all cliff tombs are attributable to these wealthy groups, but rather to “middle income families”, descendants of more powerful Han immigrants or aspiring to enhance their status and family image.¹³⁸ Cliff tombs function as a factor of social cohesion, technically allowing more experimentation in terms of tomb structure and decoration, and encouraging an increased inter-generational consciousness.

In wealthy cliff tombs of the Leshan area and further south on the Min River, rock-cut memorial halls, also found in the literature under the terms “antechambers” or “vestibules”, precede the cutting of individual chambers and remain accessible to the living (**Fig.2.5**), probably serving as shrines to perform funerary rites.



¹³⁶ Brown 2007:43-4

¹³⁷ Brown 2007:62-3.

¹³⁸ Chen Xuan 2015:14.



2.5. Outdoor and indoor views of a memorial hall along the Min River in Huangsan, Yibin city, Sichuan province. 1st to 2nd century CE. Note how the tombs are progressively added to the hall over the generations, cutting into the pre-existing architectural decoration of the hall.

Among the locations used to perform sacrifices, cultivate ancestral memory and regulate the interaction between dead and living, were the graveside, the home, and the shrine. Very few examples have survived of stone shrines placed on the ground surface above the grave (*citang* 祠堂): the Xiaotang shan shrine (129 CE *terminus ante quem*) and the Wu Liang shrine (151 AD) are the two more thoroughly studied examples. The *citang* were built by the wealthy,¹³⁹ and commoners would replace sacrifice at the shrine by sacrifice performed at home or at the grave.

The tomb itself was perhaps the primary shrine for commoners.¹⁴⁰ Despite the precept that a Han tomb is to be sealed once and for all, the burial chamber itself might have served ritual purposes for an audience whose social needs would be stronger than established cultural conventions.¹⁴¹ This hypothesis could be valid for spacious chambers with a ground-level entrance such as in Citangpo, where the entrance is marked by a pair of towers forming a gate (**Fig.2.6**).¹⁴² However, most commoners' rock-cut tombs in the Sichuan basin and Yangzi gorges, often cut in a lesser quality rock, maintain a sealed entrance in the long alley leading to the chamber (**Fig.2.7**). The chamber is furnished with ritual and functional vessels as well as figurines and

¹³⁹ Timeline 25.

¹⁴⁰ Nylan 2008.

¹⁴¹ Zhou Ligang 2016. See Brown 2007:14 and 52 for Confucian anecdotes where filial sons are attributed extreme mourning behaviours implying close contact with the tomb and its occupant.

¹⁴² The theme of the towered gate will be analysed in Chapters 7 and 8.

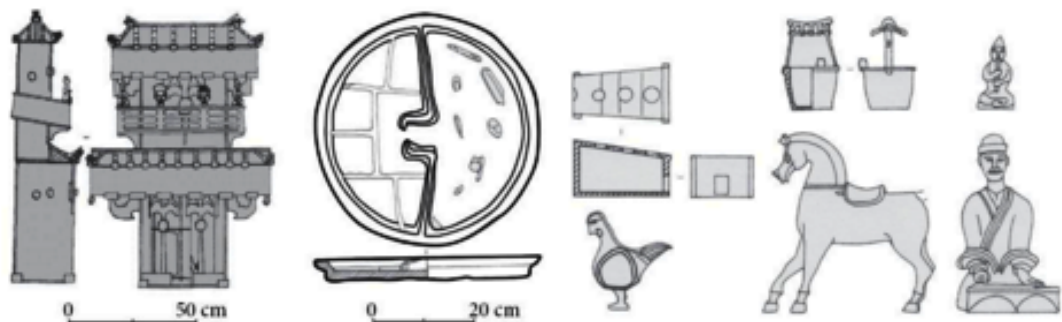
architectural models reflecting a prosperous rural estate prevail, with models of houses, wells, ponds, chickens, pigs, etc (**Fig.2.8**). The spaces and the tomb furnishings promote an ideal of the afterlife as a continuation of this life reflected in domestic themes, but they also contain references to cosmology and allusions to a heavenly journey of the soul in the form of pictorial carvings.



2.6. Type 1 cliff tomb in Citangpo, Anyue county, Sichuan province. Note the rock-cut stove, the niche to store objects and two relief models of houses carved on the cave walls, followed by a rock-cut couch to lay the body on.



2.7. Type 1 cliff tomb in Fengjie district, Chongqing municipality. Note the length of the alley, and the type of tomb closure, excluding any kind of outdoor visibility. Source: courtesy of Wushan district archaeological office.



2.8. Figurines and architectural models found in a Han Tomb. Source: Part of Figure 2.5 in Yao 2015.

Found along with other contemporaneous forms of chamber burials (mostly brick-built chambers), rock-cut tombs in Sichuan similarly privilege a durable material, stone; they display a similar iconographic programme and serve similar ritual functions. The above-mentioned characteristics for Eastern Han cliff tombs constitute what will be labelled “Type 1” cliff tombs in this study. The next subsection looks at a type of cliff tombs which does not fit the funerary ideology and social function of Han tombs, here designated as “Type 2”.

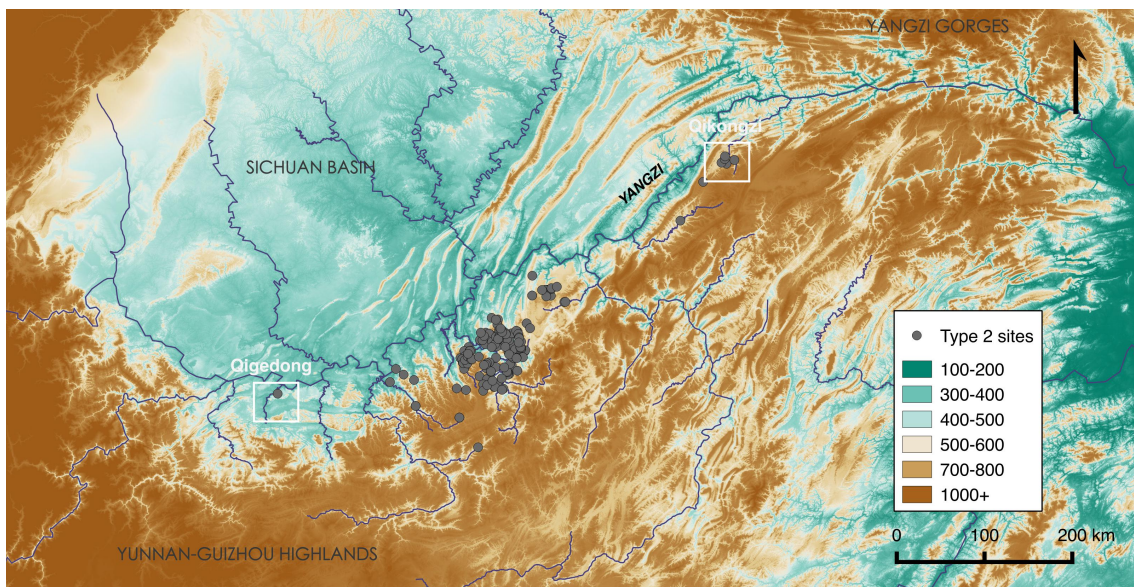
2.4.4 Type 2: Cliff tombs south of the Yangzi River

Not all cliff tombs display an obvious adherence to Han period funerary practices, or were necessarily built by communities sharing a comparable subsistence mode, social organization or religious beliefs. To this day, only one site displaying a clear divergence from Type 1 has received scholarly and public attention, the Qigedong site (**See Fig.1.2**).¹⁴³ Because of its atypical iconography and a different cave typology, the site is presented as one of a kind, or an anomaly in the context of Han cliff tombs. However, due to several inscriptions in Chinese script that refer to the Han dynastic era, Qigedong has been considered as a Han tomb. This study surveyed a series of sites similar to Qigedong and dated to the same couple of decades between 170 and 190 CE, here grouped under the provisional category “Type 2”. Type 2 sites are found between 400 and 800 meters of elevation all along the southern tributaries of the Yangzi down to Hubei province, the farthest example found being Qikongzi, 500km East of Qigedong (**Fig.2.9**). The strip of land where Type 2 cliff are found covers the whole length of the Upper Yangzi River, from Yibin in the southern Sichuan basin to Yichang in the Yangzi gorges. This area is a cultural and ecological buffer zone (**Fig.2.10**).

¹⁴³ Qigedong 1985.



2.9. View of the Qikongzi site. Lichuan county, Hubei province. Late 2nd century CE.



2.10. Distribution of Type 2 cave burials between Qigedong and Qikongzi.

Let us list the distinctive traits of the Type 2 cliff tombs. The caves are single volumes of smaller dimensions, sometimes reduced to shallow niches that can barely contain a single human body. Since no human remains have been recovered from the caves south of the Yangzi, except for later occurrences of re-use, the possibility of them being used as secondary burial or ossuary cannot be fully dismissed. They are not equipped with the rock-cut stove, shelves, and timber-like pictorial decorations

characteristic of chambers following the “house model” prevalent in Han tombs. Finally, the type of carved depictions found south of the Yangzi does not correspond entirely to the pictorial repertoire available in Han tombs, and they are placed outdoors. Considering the above-mentioned differences, the caves south of the Yangzi, located on the southwest frontier of the Han Empire in the historical moment of the latter’s decline, seem to be more than just a local effect of the centralized phenomenon of “Han tombs” due to logistical differences in technology, material and terrain.

This research explores the possibility that the “Type 2” man-made caves south of the Yangzi correspond to a distinctive tradition of placing the dead, involving actors whose identity was not elucidated, and designed to serve a function that deserves to be discussed. Departing from overlooked typological differences or consistencies, and misdated caves, this study has identified a distinct tradition of burial in man-made caves, and will map its distribution as a way to access the motivations of the cave builders and their role in local history. There is a present lack of recognition for typological differences between cliff tombs in the Sichuan basin and Yangzi gorges (Type 1), as compared to cliff tombs south of the Yangzi (Type 2). This gap in scholarship can be explained from a historiographical perspective, but it should be overcome as it obscures our perception of funerary expressions in the Southwest, and neglects the wealth of material evidence surveyed by this study.

2.5 Summary: A comparative study

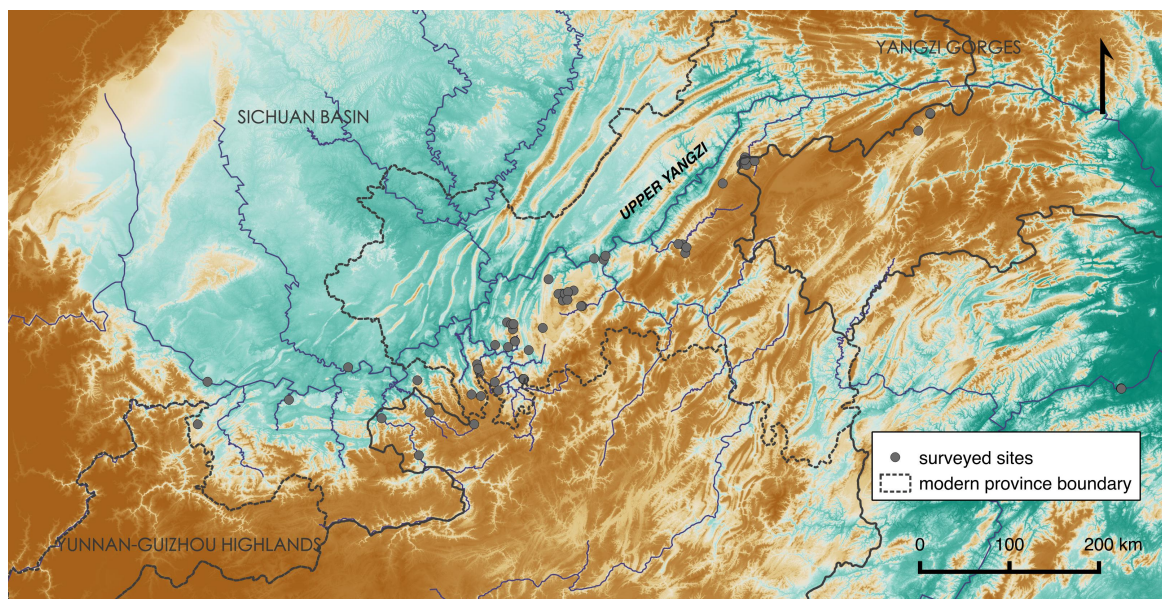
The study area, a 500km section of the southern bank of the Yangzi River, and the temporal scope of this study, circumscribed by epigraphic data between the years 120 and 223 CE, were here scrutinised in the light of three processes: the managing of frontiers, imperial collapse, and their impact on funerary production. The aim of this thesis is to document a previously uncharted area of the frontier and to identify a previously overlooked type of burials in artificial caves (Type 2). This research questions the caves’ current hasty ethnic attribution and, by addressing the three core issues cited above, produces a coherent picture of the funerary production at hand. This chapter looked at how the previously unstudied Type 2 caves south of the Yangzi River, identified here as a distinct tradition, potentially shed a new light on the limits of

imperial rule, the consequences of its collapse and the question of ethnic attribution in the material culture of frontier groups, in particular the funerary sphere. I explained the blind spot in scholarship on the type of caves which constitutes my focus by past and current conjunctions of both administrative and disciplinary boundaries. Rather than dismissing Type 2 caves as marginal evidence, the vantage point occupied by my topic provides an outsider view on the history of the southwest frontier, and more widely, on the notion of “Han”. Seen through a limited spatio-temporal window, the Type 2 caves draw the contours of a by-product of culture contact which singularity emerges through relational or comparative history. In the next chapter, the concrete steps taken in collecting data and in establishing a comparative study between Type 1 and Type 2 caves are laid out.

3 Survey strategy, data collection and interpretation

3.1 Fieldwork methodology

The present comparative study of burials in artificial caves dating to the Eastern Han period covers three different regions of Southwest China: the Sichuan basin, the Upper Yangzi River, and the area south of the Yangzi. To this day, the latter region is still largely unstudied and in parts wholly unexplored. Most surveyed groups of sites straddle modern provincial boundaries, which represents an obstacle for a comprehensive study (**Fig.3.1**). When it is considered in studies looking at funerary practices in Southwest China, it is only negatively defined. Therefore, my field survey focused on documenting the sites south of the Yangzi, and my subsequent work was to recognize the specificity of cave-cutting traditions in the area, mainly in terms of typology and location. In this chapter, the steps taken during my field survey in the years 2010-2016 are explained in order to show how research questions informed fieldwork strategy and vice versa.



3.1. Survey map 2013-2016.

3.1.1 First stage of fieldwork¹

A first stage of this research involved visiting the main ensembles of cave burials in the Sichuan basin, which are known for their complex indoor spaces and rich iconography. The most visible among these caves have been known and even modified since their creation, and the best-preserved examples have been photographed and commented upon for scholarly purposes in the last century. During the last three nation-wide surveys by the archaeological administration from each county under the monitoring of provincial-level offices, many of these sites were gathered to constitute a database. This data is still largely managed by county-level offices, which have the duty of monitoring the decay of the sites on a monthly or yearly basis, according to their estimated importance.²

Contrasting with this known fraction of cave burials in the Sichuan basin, the most remarkable recent finds are from rescue excavations, often accessible only in unpublished preliminary reports.³ Current finds include large-scale necropolises in the vicinity of Chengdu such as Xinjin, now threatened by urbanization, excavated by the joint efforts of the Sichuan Provincial Archaeological Institute, the Chengdu Municipal Archaeological Institute and the Archaeology department at Sichuan University.⁴

In addition, as I was based in Chongqing, I was also able to look at cave cemeteries located directly on the main course of the Yangzi River, which since the Three Gorges dam flooding are surveyed on a yearly basis by the Chongqing Heritage Centre, when the level of the water allows it. For some of these rescued sites, publications are available in a series of volumes entitled “Reports on the Cultural Relics Conservation in the Three Gorges Dam Project”.⁵ This preliminary fieldwork and literature review constitute the basis for any study that aims at a deeper understanding of Han period funerary practices in the Southwest. This preliminary research’s output constituted

¹ An appendix to Chapter 3 entitled “11.2.Fieldwork” provides a detailed calendar of my field survey and a list of surveyed sites’ locations.

² National Survey unpublished data 2009 for Banan, Fuling, Lichuan, Qijiang and Xishui.

³ For example, Huangjinwan 2016 (unpublished), courtesy of Zhang Gaike, team leader for the excavation in Huangjinwan.

⁴ Visit to the site allowed by Dr. Suo Dehao, Chengdu Municipal Archaeological Institute, team leader for the excavation in Xinjin.

⁵ Three Gorges 1997-2009.

much of the contextual information provided in the following Chapter 4, and allowed me to design my thesis as a comparative study.

Throughout this first stage of survey, which preceded my PhD research, my attention was drawn to the numerous small and medium sized cave cemeteries which dot the hilly Sichuanese countryside. My own survey differed from the official database because it also included minor ensembles of previously unrecorded caves. Despite their reduced scale and the lesser amount of decoration found in the caves, these suggested that the tradition of cutting spaces into stone, and a form of monumentality, was relevant even at the small scale of the single hamlet in Eastern Han times.

At this stage of my survey, I started to pay attention to tool marks and recorded all unfinished caves I encountered, at different levels of completions, as I thought they would be useful to compare rock-cutting processes. I felt that through these specimens more than in any finished product, typologies could be deconstructed and understood.⁶ Later on during my PhD research, I would pursue this initial interest in identifying stone-working traditions by enriching my collection of unfinished caves and setting up an experiment in replicating a life-size cave (detailed in Chapter 6).

The carved motifs found in these caves reflected a thematic homogeneity with Eastern Han funerary iconography. However, I noticed that at the local level of a single river course, consistencies in style were often stronger than any reference to Eastern Han funerary iconography seen elsewhere in the Sichuan basin. Despite these marked local traits, the rock-cut spaces accommodated whole families, they were equipped with stoves, couches and storage niches in line with the Eastern Han ideals of mirroring the world of the living in that of the dead.

Crucially, when I pushed my investigation south of the Yangzi, in the deep-cut river valleys of the Qi River, a tributary of the Yangzi, I encountered yet another kind of topography, where the burial caves suddenly took a much stronger presence in the landscape, and where the very conception of the funerary space described above

⁶ This was the focus of my MA dissertation, partly published in Wei 2015.

seemed challenged. In addition, the inscriptions attached to the caves suggested a later date for the caves, and the carved depictions, while they hardly matched what I had been used to see elsewhere in Southwest China, showed some consistency in execution and style across the area South of the Yangzi. I considered these observations to be a valid starting point of my PhD research, as they challenged our current understanding on Han tombs in ancient Southwest China.

3.1.2 Second stage of fieldwork

Having decided to focus on the unusual type of caves found in greater concentrations along the Qi River, a southern tributary of the Yangzi, I temporarily named them “Type 2”, as a working category. By looking at each affluent of the Qi River, I soon was able to identify the main characteristics of Type 2 cemeteries and caves, as summarized in section 4 of Chapter 2. Among the cave burials of the area, I was able to find more than 30 caves that could be dated by epigraphy to the last couple of decades of the Eastern Han Dynasty. These constitute the epigraphic evidence that provides a time frame for this study, as introduced in section 3 of Chapter 2. The impressive number of inscriptions along the Qi River as compared to cliff tombs located elsewhere in Southwest China also allowed me to construct a reference collection for Type 2 caves. The funerary spaces were almost systematically high-placed and often reduced to, at times, being barely enough room to accommodate a flexed body, and the ornamentation was mostly external, located on the cliff. When looking at the published archaeological record for similar characteristics, I encountered the rock-cut cemetery of Qigedong, surveyed during the first government-led archaeological survey at a national scale.⁷ The caves in Qigedong are ostentatious, high placed, and they have inscriptions, which date them to the same time period as the Type 2 caves in the Qi river valley. However, Qigedong is located on the Changning River, a secondary tributary of the Yangzi in southern Sichuan, about 200km west of the Qi River. Thereby, I realized that keeping in mind the characteristics of the Type 2 caves, I had to reassess their overall spatial distribution both in the field and in the literature.

I proceeded by looking at areas neighbouring the Qi River, with the idea of bridging those areas with the Qigedong site, located 200km away. By pushing my survey into

⁷ Qigedong 1985.

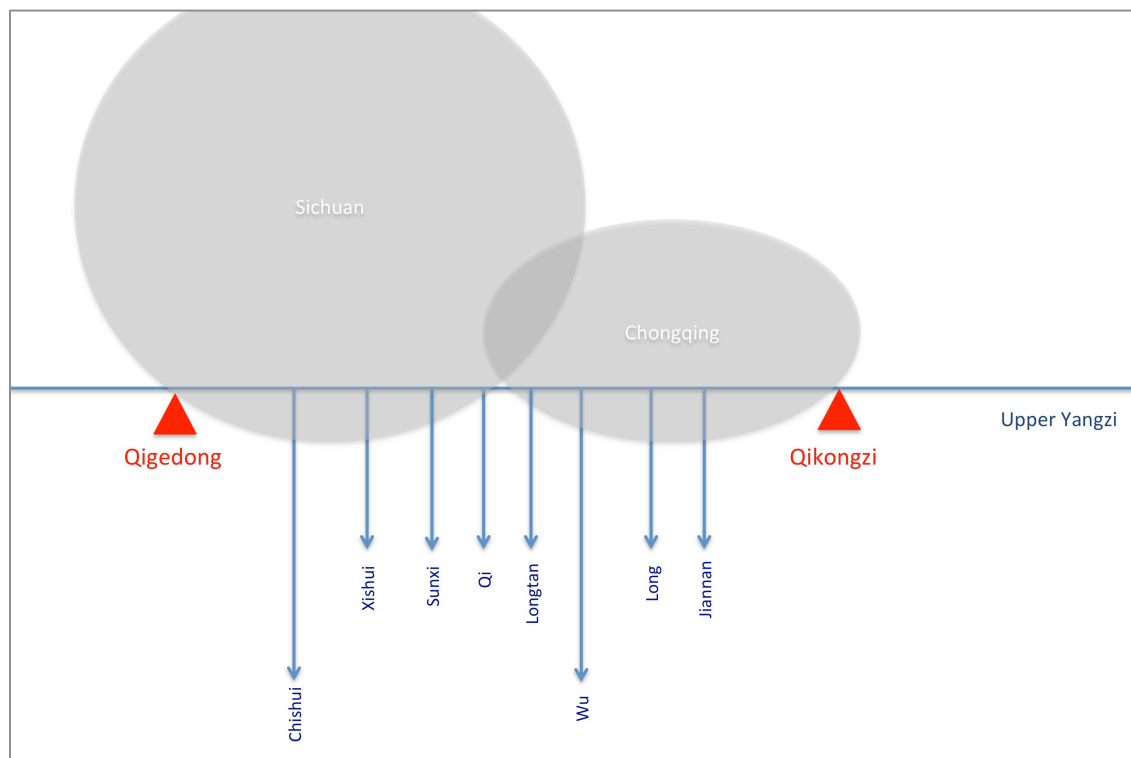
the valleys located east and west of the Qi River, roughly parallel to its course as they too flowed down from the Yunnan-Guizhou highlands into the Sichuan basin, I found similar groups of caves, but only up to a certain point. Two major southern tributaries of the Yangzi interrupted the distribution of Type 2 caves: to the west, the course of the Chishui River, an important communication axis both today and in ancient times, and to the east, the course of the Wu River, equally important in terms of scale and historical role. As Qigedong was my only example of Type 2 cemetery located beyond the Chishui River, it became clear that although the distribution of Type 2 was not continuous, it extended well beyond the eastern and western limits I had encountered when starting from the Qi River. As it would have been an impossible task to survey each and every tributary of the Upper Yangzi, this was the time to go back to published results of national surveys. I started looking for Type 2 cemeteries in every description of cave burials I could find in the Provincial Archaeological Atlases for Sichuan, Chongqing, Yunnan, Guizhou, Hubei and Hunan provinces, focusing on height from ground and cave dimension as evidence. By combining the experience gained in fieldwork and the results suggested by the published archaeological record, I started to plan a third stage of fieldwork, where I would systematically look for the relationship between the type of waterway and the type of caves. I expected to find Type 2 caves in niches similar to the Qi River all along the southern bank of the Yangzi, and I was looking forward to finding consistencies in the way Type 2 cemeteries located themselves in the landscape, at the scale the late Han southwest frontier.

3.1.3 Third stage of fieldwork

In the previous stage of fieldwork, I had developed a cave typology and looked at similar caves that shared the characteristics of my initial dated sample of Type 2 caves from the Qi river basin. For this third step, I decided to systematically compare Type 2 and Type 1 caves. This stage of fieldwork thus functioned exclusively by contrasting Type 1 and Type 2 in terms of their location (north and south of the Yangzi, major and minor tributaries, riverside and mountainous hinterland, etc.) and their characteristics (height from ground, visibility, cave dimensions, nature of depictions and inscriptions, etc.). By doing so, I had to question some of the very first steps I took in my research. What was initially a temporary division revealed to be in many ways artificial, since as my Type 2 distribution area extended, the Type 1 distribution gradually had to include

wealthy ensembles such as Huangsan on the Min River as well as modest cemeteries such as Zhongxian in the Three Gorges. However, opposed to the diversity of Type 1, which encompassed all caves that could be assimilated to the Sichuan basin and Three Gorges ensembles regardless of their scale, there was the striking homogeneity in Type 2 caves over an unexpectedly extended area. Suddenly, the caves that previous research had overlooked, or considered as marginal evidence, showed a major typological consistency over a wider area than the caves that were considered as “mainstream”.

A first achievement of stage three of my field survey was thus to find out that on a 500km stretch of land south of the Yangzi, running from Qigedong, my point of departure in southern Sichuan to Qikongzi in western Hubei, a consistent type of rock-cut tomb was produced at the end of the Eastern Han dynasty, which did not match cave burial practices in the Sichuan basin and the Three Gorges area. The second achievement of this third stage of fieldwork was to refine my understanding of the distribution of Type 2 caves. As mentioned above, from previous survey I was able to determine that the Chishui and Wu rivers, two major communication axes between the Yunnan-Guizhou highlands and the Sichuan basin, interrupted the distribution of Type 2 caves. This time however, by checking the tributaries of these rivers, I could prove that while Type 2 caves avoided the main riverine transportation axis, they were systematically present along smaller waterways or mountain passes in-between valleys (Fig.3.2).



3.2. Schematic view of the study area with Sichuan and Three Gorges/Chongqing area as backgrounds, upper Yangzi as main axis, Qigedong and Qikongzi as western and eastern edges, the 2 major and 6 minor tributaries on which this study focuses.

It was thus through repeated field surveys that Type 2 caves appeared to be located exclusively on what can be regarded as alternative routes in times of socio-political turmoil, at the fall of the Han. Lastly, to conclude my investigation into typological differences and the nature of rock-cutting traditions, I experimented in replicating a cave in sandstone.

3.1.4 How fieldwork strategy informed research questions

My preliminary conclusions at each stage of fieldwork raised doubts concerning the material researched: the data seemed marginal, “flat” or homogeneous, and lacked settlement and artefacts.⁸ Such drawbacks encouraged a response in the way this research subsequently evolved. Firstly, selecting an area considered as marginal was a conscious choice: when focusing on a frontier in times of collapse, the margins become the core and Han influence is to be considered as a relic. The homogeneity of the (all

⁸ Looting and re-use of the highly visible caves probably started at an early stage and continued over a millenium, as reported by Torrance: “In finishing this article I cannot help recording my sorrow at the work of havoc and destruction the Chinese have wrought in these caves. They seem to take a wanton delight in destroying coffins and smashing all the burnt-clay articles they can find. The sarcophagi are taken out and sold to rich people for water cisterns. Thus their carvings are speedily defaced. (...) And all this in a land where the punishment for grave robbery is death. Provided an old grave of a former dynasty is on the landed property of the man who destroys it, there is no law to hinder him from doing as he pleases with it, unless it be the tomb of some famous scholar or soldier.” Torrance 2016:42.

funerary) data is indeed problematic: therefore it was compensated for by recently excavated settlement data from either the Chishui River or published results from the Three Gorges Dam rescue excavations on the main course of the Yangzi. No direct settlement evidence is available in the immediate vicinity of the Type 2 caves. But then, it is a distinctive feature of archaeology to deal with “unobservable hominid behaviour patterns from indirect traces in bad samples”.⁹ In the area south of the Yangzi, tens of thousands of caves ostensibly are present in the landscape, part of them known to bear readable epigraphic inscriptions and carved depictions. Deciding that these are not worth researching would bear the risk of ending up only researching material deemed researchable, sending one back to extant mainstream interpretations. The above listed critiques do rightly note some limitations of this study, but they are also responsible for its final breadth of scope. It is the combination of such critiques and my own doubts that pushed this research beyond the initial Qi River precincts, to engage with Eastern Han burials in artificial caves as a whole and to question the nature of Han influence on its frontiers.

I have been accustomed during my years of study to hear that research is not to be told from the “context of discovery” but rather, from the “context of justification”, meaning that to best deliver research results, one should invert the order of events and write the narrative with a view to the intended conclusions. However, there is also a case that potential conclusions are less pregnant than the research process itself. Indeed, this research is mainly based on new material from direct survey, and the merit of filling a gap in existing scholarship mainly goes to the survey strategy adopted here.

Added to the time slot indicated by the epigraphic inscriptions, and the typological differences that first motivated this research, the two above pieces of information provided enough elements to formulate my hypothesis. In the first stage of fieldwork, several questions were raised: Can I identify stone working traditions distinct from mainstream Han tombs? Was Han funerary ideology necessarily connected to the technology of cutting spaces in stone, or could the caves be invested with a different function? What evidence of a different function do I have, what are the characteristics

⁹ Clarke 1973:17.

of this alternative tradition? I concluded this first stage by identifying a group of characteristics, including their late date, cave size, presence in the landscape, and location. Facing this alternative potential tradition coined Type 2, more precise questions could be formulated: How consistent is this alternative tradition, as compared to mainstream Han cliff tombs, in terms of typology and distribution? How important can such an alternative tradition be, is it local, supra local, interregional? Is this tradition consistent and important enough to challenge the mainstream interpretations, which present Type 2 caves as insignificant outliers, peripheral, and later i.e. decadent examples? Finally, after the third stage of fieldwork, the questions acquired a wider socio-political reach: Given their widespread and strategic distribution, what are the intentions of these cave builders? How do they relate themselves to Han presence on the southwest frontier? What does burial evidence tell us about Han influence in the Southwest? Can the Type 2 cave builders be considered as agents in the reformulation of Han culture at the collapse of empire? Without the progressive adaptation of my survey strategy, there was no way for my research questions to reach this level of depth and precision.

3.2 Updating methods for collecting data

3.2.1 Collaborating with county-level archaeological offices to access national survey archives

As the material published in the above-described atlases is continuously being updated, fieldwork is necessary to juxtapose the available literature with the reality of the field. County-level and provincial-level archaeological offices or heritage centres are the prime referents when it comes to the middle ground between publications and the actual sites, as they are in charge of updating and managing the national survey archive. While provincial-level institutions usually possess a higher level of expertise, and are in charge of excavations, their advice is often insufficient when it comes to rock-art or open-air sites at the local level: such immovable sites remain accessible only through local guides. Therefore, collaborating with county-level archaeological offices is unavoidable. Each of these local offices has its own practice, its main duty being to compile forms on the sites and monitor changes. Long-term, locally-hired members of staff possess an impressive gazetteer-like knowledge of the area: they are

familiar with the geography of the area, its ethnography, and collaborate closely with the local village communities who live next to the sites. Most of them, however, who led the 2nd national-level archaeological survey back in the late eighties and often personally discovered or first recorded the sites, are now on the verge of retirement. Since data collected during earlier survey is usually not edited or updated, these local officers remain an essential reference, since no further work has been done on previously recorded locations during the 3rd and last national survey. Without an experienced officer available, the main source of data held by any official institution is the 3rd national archaeological survey forms, despite the impressive amount of newly discovered material since 2010. The national survey's format is standard across counties and provinces: it contains GPS coordinates, a discursive description (number of caves, measurement of one among the caves, outstanding features), a map of immediate surroundings with contour lines, a scaled CAD drawing of the cemetery, a scaled CAD drawing of one cave and a couple of photographs. Photographs from the national survey data are of uneven quality, usually showing the site as a whole and one of the caves.

Access to the national survey archives is not regulated at the moment. For some districts, I was granted access to the whole archive (Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality). For others I had to give indications on the type of sites I was looking for, which meant that my query would be filtered by how the staff at local archaeological offices would understand my research, and I was only granted access to a limited number of files (Banan, Fuling, Fengdu, Shizhu, Lichuan, Jianshi, Xishui county or district). Finally, in most cases I would only consult the summarised version of the archive files, without the GPS locations, measurements and more detailed descriptions. Apart from the uneven quality of the archive, access thus remains a major issue, which I tried to overcome by producing contract-type documents where I clearly stated the purpose of my research, its outcomes, and the way the data would be delivered in my thesis. Paradoxically, publication pressure on local archaeological offices led to a situation where a foreign researcher might appear less as a competitor than a Chinese academic would, as the former publishes in another language and for another audience. Overall, it would be worth considering how part of this archive

could be systematically accessible throughout the country, and made compatible with other existing inventory systems for archaeological and architectural heritage.¹⁰

3.2.2 Collecting my own data

In addition to the unpublished official surveys shared by cultural relic offices during my survey, ways I collected my own data were the following: GPS locations, photography, rubbings, measurements, sketching, experimental archaeology and droning.

Several GPS locations for each surveyed site: these were compared with GPS locations from the national survey data kept by county-level offices. During fieldwork, I first used a handheld GPS, to then switch to a GPS receiver attached to my camera for the subsequent surveys, which allowed all photographs taken to have an embedded GPS location. Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 5 was used to keep a catalogue of the photographs throughout the years, as GPS locations are shown in the metadata of the photographs and useful categories and tags can be added without moving or modifying the original photographs.

Photography: a 360-degree view of the landscape around each surveyed site was taken, as well as an integral view of the group of caves, a photograph of each accessible cave opening, and photographs from the inside of each accessible cave. Artificial lighting is necessary for the survey and recording of indoor depictions. As line-carved figures easily get confused with the deep chisel marks of the wall dressings, low-angled light is preferred to frontal lighting. When allowed by the vegetation coverage, an aluminium telescopic mast with a camera secured on top of it was used to obtain non-distorted, frontal views of the cliffs up to 10m height, which were then assembled to obtain integral views of the rock surface. A 10cm colour scale was used for close-ups, to keep a record of the length and width of tool traces and the external appearance of the sandstone surface. In a few cases, an integral view was taken of the four cave walls, the ceiling and the ground, under even lighting, to proceed to a reconstruction of the cave space by photogrammetry.¹¹ A copy of this material was left

¹⁰ See Williams 2016:129-130 for a discussion on the applicability of the Getty Conservation Institute/World Monuments Fund ARCHES heritage inventory system to archaeological and architectural heritage in Bhutan.

¹¹ I also attempted to use aerial photography during survey, as detailed in Appendix 11.2.4.

in each county-level cultural relic office, and photographs from the national survey data were obtained in exchange, the latter being limited to images of cave openings and of very poor resolution due to a lack of photographic equipment and lighting.

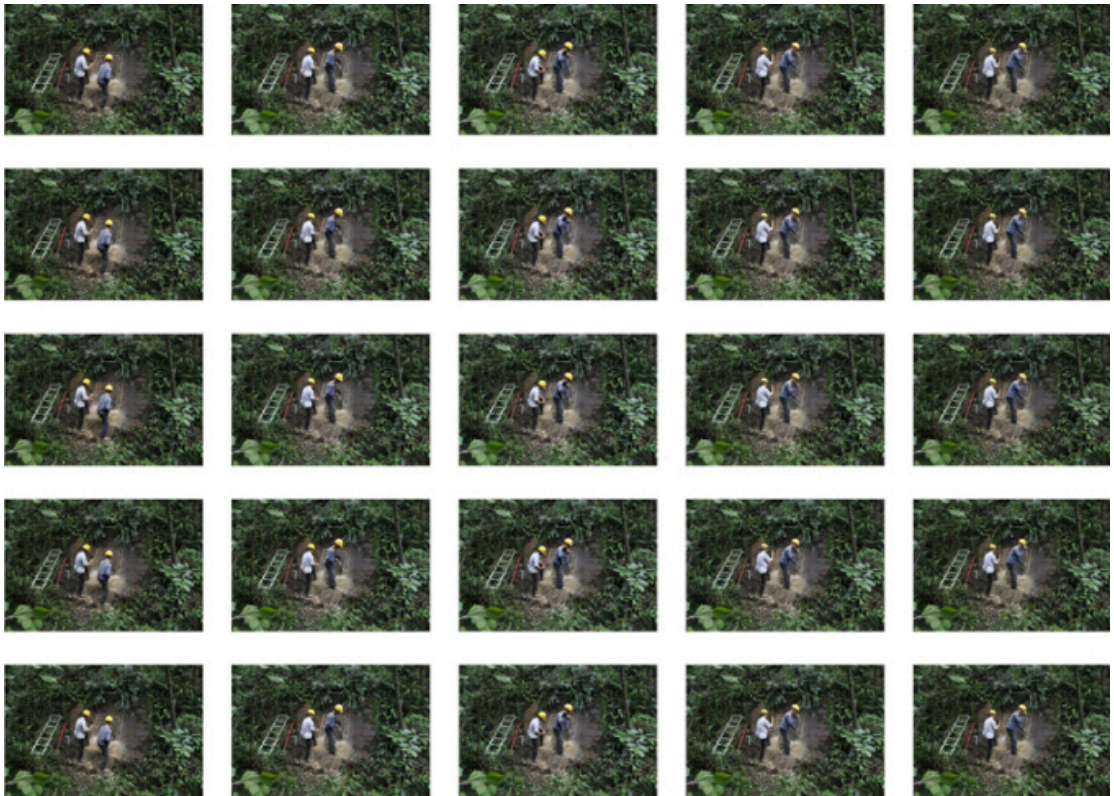
Rubbings: especially in the first stage of fieldwork, rubbings of carvings and epigraphy were taken when allowed by the type of sandstone (only the yellow and dark purple varieties of sandstone proved dense and tough enough to be rubbed). I compiled a catalogue of figures, geometric patterns and epigraphy. However, I soon realised how damaging this activity could be for the carvings, despite it being still carried on a daily basis by both cultural relic officers and amateurs. Rubbing has been an essential activity in the literati toolkit, within the context of “Metal and Stone Studies”, a form of antiquarianism that flourished in premodern China (9th-19th centuries CE). For their obvious subjective and interpretative value,¹² rubbings belong rather to the realm of aesthetic appreciation of a carving, than to the archaeologist’s toolkit. Rubbings are still produced, traded and collected today by epigraphy lovers, antiquarians and scholars. In the fields of Han funerary carvings and epigraphy, rubbings still play a major role in visual documentation. Rubbing practices would benefit from being investigated as a traditional form of knowledge with its specific sensorial and conceptual experience, which can feed the current interest for creative practices in archaeology, but they are not adequate to record the rock-cut spaces and reliefs of Sichuanese sandstone.

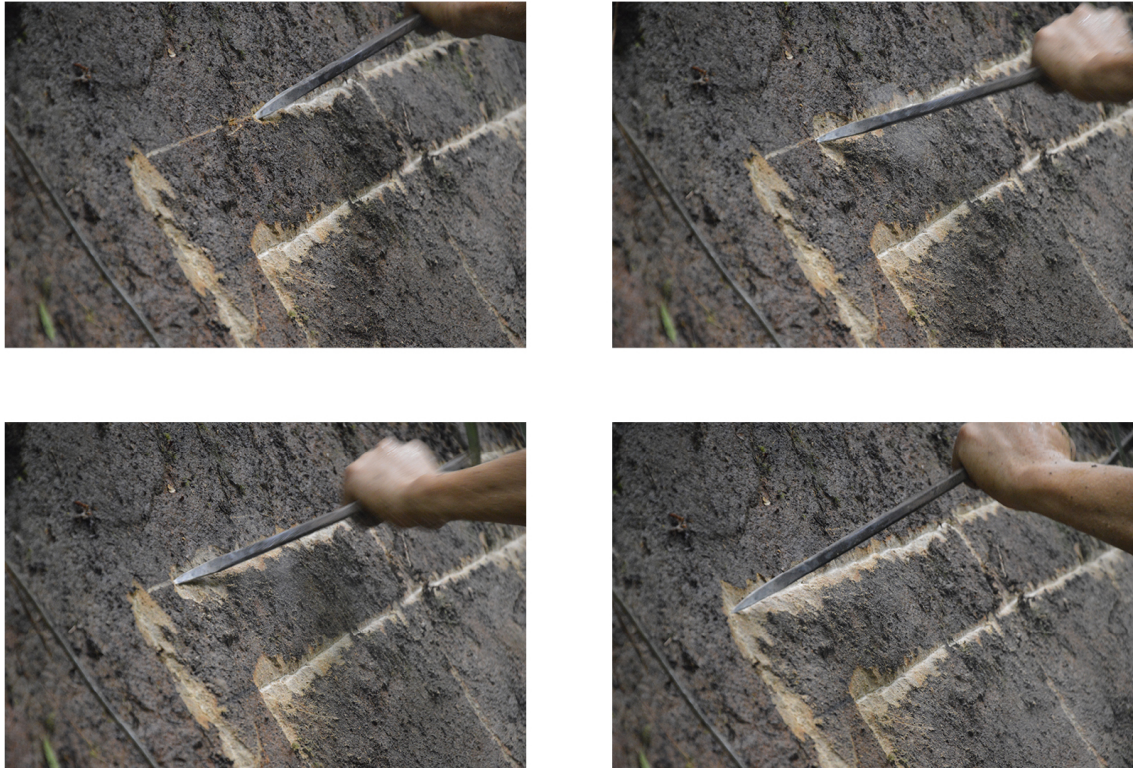
Measurements: In the second and third stages of fieldwork, measurements of the caves’ width, depth and height and of the cave opening, as well as of the recessions on the doorframe were taken when possible. Caves could be measured when accessible and complete, and enough time had to be bestowed to me by the archaeological officer in charge. As a general rule, I tried to obtain more than one measurement for the visited cemeteries, for caves that were not yet recorded in the national data survey. As I noticed, most of the unusually shaped caves, including the very shallow and wide “niche-like” cave, are not part of the record yet. I kept a record of the number of recessions on doorframes, as the national survey data often only describes

¹² In his time, Segalen already denounced the quasi-religious attitude towards rubbings among Chinese literati as a “superstition of exactitude”, which became untenable when it comes to recording the depth of relief. Segalen 1917:11.

one cave per cemetery, which made it hard to figure out the relative proportion of single, double or triple-recessed doorframes per cemetery.

Experimental archaeology: In the third stage of fieldwork, based on a reference collection of unfinished caves, two stonemason were hired to produce replicas of rock-cut caves in sandstone. The site, located in a hilly heritage park surrounding a wartime residence of the Republican period political leader Chiang Kai-shek was kindly lent for the experiment by the archaeological office of Banan district in Chongqing Municipality. The two experiments in rock-cut carving are detailed in section 5 of Chapter 6. In a first experiment, conducted over four days, a boulder of hard sandstone was selected at the foot of a mountain. A three-layer recessed door was cut into this relatively hard material. In a second experiment, taking six days, a cliff of softer sandstone was selected on the top of the same mountain, where a full size rock-cut chamber was achieved. The style, shape and dimensions of the recessed door and cave were deduced and averaged from existing data from several thousands of Eastern Han caves. No strict instructions were given but hypothetic reconstructions of the *chaîne opératoire* were shared with the workers. Both experiments were realized by the same team of two stonemasons. The workers were given photographs of unfinished caves dated to the Eastern Han dynasty (2nd to 3rd century CE), so that they could have an idea of the several stages leading to the completion of a rock-cut cave. All ten days of experiment were fully registered using two cameras, one set on remote shutter release for a 3 to 10 second interval (**Fig.3.3**), the other one taking close-ups of carving gestures (**Fig.3.4**). A full record of the cavity was also taken every 30 minutes, and later processed in Agisoft Photoscan to create 3d models of the carving sequence.





3.3. Camera 1: remote shutter release (3 to 10 seconds interval).

3.4. Camera 2: (A) close-up of the replicated cave and (B) carving gestures.

Moreover, a sound recording of the carver's rhythm covers the experiment entire duration.¹³ The aim of the experiment was to have a reference scale for time, effort and skill involved in rock-cut monuments, to rethink typologies based on the appearance of finished caves, from the point of view of choices made by stonemasons during the making process and the subsequent variations in cave shape, and to reconsider our definition of stone working traditions.

3.2.3 Obstacles for a Quantitative Spatial Analysis

Quantitative queries are not part of the main methods of enquiry discussed in Chapter 3. The research priorities of quantitative landscape archaeology has nevertheless informed the methods of data collection, survey planning, and the formulation of hypothesis and the backbone structure of the thesis. Data collection was planned with a quantitative spatial analysis in mind:

- Cover a maximum number of Type 1 and Type 2 sites for the Upper course of the Yangzi (published sites and a few case studies from my own survey for monitoring purposes)

¹³ Sound recordings were part of a Public Archaeology project. Wei and Griffiths 2015.

- Collect an exhaustive record of all Type 2 cemeteries for one southern tributary of the Yangzi (Qi River and all its water network, unpublished sites from local cultural relics office and my own survey)
- Obtaining a high resolution DEM for a single valley to reconstruct a Type 2 funerary landscape (Qingxi tributary of the Qi river, my own survey)

Within the whole Southern bank of the Yangzi, the first step was to visualize major watersheds, and recognize their boundaries and interconnections. Such exercise led me to identify minor routes such as Qi or secondary routes that connect two major routes southwards. Within single valleys such as the Qingxi tributary, one would want to ally the highest possible resolution of data collection with an agent-based perception of the surroundings of single caves and cemeteries.

This structured from the start my survey in 3 scales, with one main question formulated at each scale:

(1) Macro scale query: watershed question

When looking at the fragmented landscapes of the Southwest one wonders at what scale geographical and topographical boundaries should be considered, if they are to be considered at all.¹⁴ One example of application for this is the watershed question, looking at relationships between the distribution of groups and the drainage basin of rivers, being understood as:

- Did people identify with a specific valley or river?
- What was the scale of this identification?
- How can we define meaningful territorial units beyond a river?

At the end of this question, I chose to look at watersheds to structure my enquiry. A watershed corresponds to the drainage basin of a river course, it includes its outlet (confluence of upper courses) and course. Bigger rivers can be segmented into several watersheds which ease the reading of their course. Watersheds usually function like a tree, and the limits between watersheds can be significantly used.

¹⁴“the relationships are less ethno-linguistic than geographic, between villages and partners, who create cohesion in a multi-ethnic landscape” (Robinne and Sadan 2007:304).

(2) Meso scale query : assessment of landscape accessibility

This question preceded the reconstruction of a network of southwards routes and the relation between as formulated in Chapters 4 and 5.

The first step is to identify more walked routes south of the Yangzi, which would also be hypothetical centres of population mass, and see how these correspond to cave burial sites. The obtained network would be only based on the physical landscape and Han times sites. To enrich the results, the same question can be asked integrating the more complete information available in the area regarding trade routes known for Tang to Qing times. The query would be led on three main axes heading to the highland hub of Bi, present-day Zunyi in Guizhou province, from locations on the Yangzi River (Hejiang-to-Zunyi, Jiangjin-to-Zunyi and Fuling-to-Zunyi), integrating the known intermediary steps between origin and destination.

- *Select 50 to 100 sites > connect them into a network > run least cost path > will summarize the lines into a raster surface. Most walked routes will appear.*
- *Second map would be made with circuitscape.org: looks like an electric current connecting two poles, with higher and lower current, according to obstacles such as slope.*

Finally, I would end up with 2 generic maps (least cost path and circuitscape), to be compared with my map of reconstructed proto-historical geography.

A second step is to formulate relations between routes and cemeteries: Was the function of the cemeteries, or the interest of their owners (potentially merchants or involved in trade and transportation) linked with strategic routes? Are bigger cemeteries or more elaborate caves found in proximity of nodes in the transportation network (portage towns)? These questions would be addressed by running a nearest neighbour analysis between cemeteries and identified nodes in the transportation network.

- *Model the location of portage towns hydrologically, from the DEM, not from archaeological sources (too patchy). Find all rapids, or drops in river courses (use modern sources on hydropower to locate those). Determine for each river the point where navigability ceases (from historical sources too, can be included*

a few citations, but mostly as for today, taking into consideration navigation techniques.

- *Run a nearest neighbour analysis on cemeteries according to the identified nodes in the circulatory routes.*

The results can be compared to the Zhenxi river example and allow me to generalize the identified relation between portage towns and concentration of cemeteries.

(3) Micro scale query: viewshed analysis

The visibility of rock-cut cavities conspicuously placed in the local canyon-and-plateau landscape was enforced by the addition of recessed cave openings, and outdoor inscriptions or depictions. These are perceptible to us now as it was for their users and audience. If we assume that there is some visual connection between cemeteries and settlements, we would like to see which among the areas of flat land were visible from tombs, and vice versa.

Prerequisites for viewshed analysis would be to produce my own DEM for a single canyon (such as the Qingxi River), as a viewshed analysis on the coarse DEM available would make no sense. To address the caves' visibility and their potential relationship to settlements in quantitative terms, one would proceed as follows:

- We first should calculate the viewshed of tombs (0 or 1 for individual viewsheds), and their intersection. Some of the stretches of land where cemeteries are located will cumulate viewsheds (2, 3, 4 would be the values). The areas of cumulated viewsheds that are visible from more than one group of caves could be called "areas of contested visibility".

Having calculated the viewshed for each group of caves and investigated the relationship between viewsheds (Do they overlap or are they exclusive and avoid each other?), the second step would be to identify areas of flat land for potential settlements.

- One would first need to define flat land by classifying a slope map derived from the DEM. Determine the maximum amount of declivity for a piece of land to be called "flat" enough to settle on. Describe the distribution of this flat land: along rivers, and often floodable? On top of plateaux, or raised? Among these

areas of flat land, which are the ones that are most likely to have contained a settlement?

Finally, potential locations for settlements would be located at the intersection between viewsheds and areas of flat land.

A first obstacle for the application of quantitative queries to the data at hand was the much contrasted topography of the study area. Any point-pattern analysis would need to go around first order effects which affect the distribution of caves, thus the natural limitations of deep-cut canyons, acting like “corridors”, and areas of flat land, which are partly subjected to flooding. For example, if one had to calculate whether the tombs are regularly spaced, he would have to first restrict his query to only the river courses. What he would look at are thus more “linear clusters” than clusters in a Euclidian space (surface). A second concern was that the fine type of analysis led in Chapters 4 and 5, based on both historical sources and case-to-case comparisons between Type 1 and Type 2 sites' distribution, is hardly matched by quantitative queries. Finally, I failed at producing my own DEM for a 5 km section of the Qingxi tributary, which would have been fine enough to lead a valid viewshed analysis and reach an agent-based perception of the surroundings of single caves and cemeteries.

3.3 Type of data and methods for interpretation.

As laid out above, this study relies on cave typology as well as epigraphic, pictorial and documentary material. The generic structure, the main challenges faced and the interpretative choices made by this study are detailed below for each type of data. Having detailed the methods for field survey and the type of data collected, this section shows how each type of data was analysed in its own right and how the information retrieved from each type of data is related to the location of the sites. For each type of source used in this study, a recapitulative table evaluating its reliability and listing the encountered obstacles during survey and interpretation is provided in Appendix 11.2.6.

3.3.1 Cemetery and cave typology

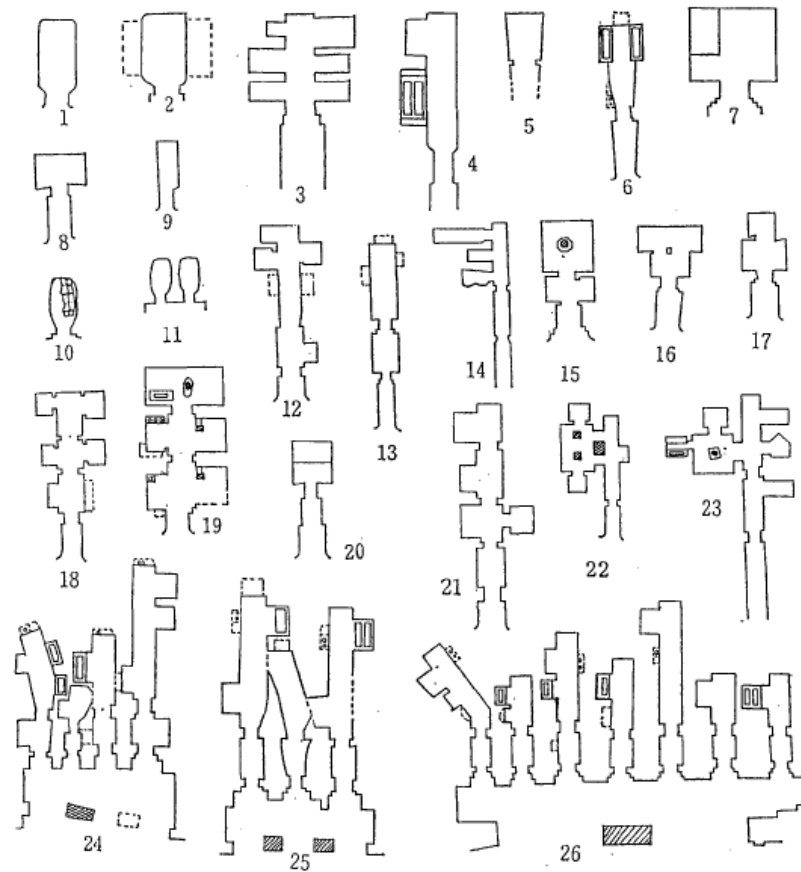
Many of my research questions were based on typological differences for cemeteries and caves. Apart from cultural and disciplinary biases developed in Chapter 2, the poor

quality of the data is another obstacle to the identification of alternative funerary traditions south of the Yangzi. The first issue is inaccurate terminology: there is no consensus on descriptive terms¹⁵ used in Archaeological Atlas of China (*Zhongguo wenwu dituji*) series,¹⁶ which are the only published version of the records held by county-level archaeological offices compiled at the provincial levels. This reflects a coordination problem between archaeological offices from different modern administrative regions encountered during direct survey. Chronology, typology and terminology vary between counties across one single province, even more so across provincial boundaries. This study, which looks at a trans-provincial phenomenon, overcomes the above-listed obstacles mainly by re-evaluating available typologies directly on the field, identifying new types and getting rid of superfluous categories. Understanding the relation between typology, of shape of the final product and technology, or cutting process, was a major motivation for the experiment in replicating a cave led during my last stage of fieldwork. Finally, in several cases, epigraphy or carved depictions were decisive in rectifying misattributed dates.

The generic structure of Type 1 caves is not homogeneous. As seen from the table compiled by Luo Erhu, it varies in different areas of Southwest China and over time, from early the Eastern Han to the Shu Han period (1st cent. CE to 3rd cent. CE) **(Fig.3.5)**

¹⁵ For example, the difference between a barrel-shaped arched or curved cave ceiling seems to be one of nuance only if one looks at the actual caves.

¹⁶ In Bibliography as "Atlas+Name of Province+Date of publication".



3.5. Typology of cliff tombs in Southwest China, from single chambers (1) to multiple chambers attached to an open antechamber (26). Number (1), (7) and (9) correspond to Type 2 cave typology. All other types are not found south of the Yangzi. Source: Luo Erhu 2001:188.

As introduced in Chapter 2, the model of a “Han Tomb”, or Type 1, spread to thriving provincial centres in the Sichuan basin along with mass immigration, water management and agricultural techniques, as it adapted to hubs of trade and salt extraction industry in the Yangzi gorges, and as it reconfigured southern highland polities such as Dian. Despite the distinct stone working technology employed to construct rock-cut burials, these kept being used contemporaneously with other forms of chamber burial, mainly in brick chambers, and they retain recognizable characteristics of Han culture and funerary ideology in both burial structure and grave goods assemblages. Commoners’ tombs cut into sandstone hills conserved their function as a replica for the domestic sphere, being equipped with cooking stoves and couches for the dead, while higher status tombs replicate the wooden architecture of wealthy residences. The impressive ensembles along the Min River, in Leshan,¹⁷ demarcate themselves from the surviving evidence of Han tombs elsewhere in the empire, through the innovative addition of rock-cut commemorative halls accessible to

¹⁷ Dated to the years 136-159 as for Xiaoba in Leshan, Sichuan Province. Gao Wen 1990:20.

the living, that are highly visible on riverside sandstone cliffs. The table below summarizes features of cliff tombs in several areas of Southwest China (**Fig.3.6**). Cliff tombs found on the main course of the Yangzi and along its major tributaries include multi-chambered examples on the Min River and single chamber tombs from south-eastern Sichuan and the Chongqing Area. When rock-cut burials appear also south of the Yangzi, from the present state of research in the area, they are apparently not preceded by the use of brick chambers or used along other forms of burials,¹⁸ and present several differences which led us to the formulation of a Type 2 cliff tomb. The Type 2 sites identified by this study thus correspond to the south-eastern Sichuan and Chongqing area tombs whose features were influenced by Yunnan and Guizhou cave burials.

Area	Feature	Location and Geology	Tomb Structure	Important Feature
Chengdu-Leshan	Single chamber -multiple chambers; most consist of tunnel, door and burial chamber. In the plan of front and rear chamber or multiple chambers.	Secondary platform along the Min River and the Qingyi 青衣 River. Red sandstone. The tomb entrances are relatively low on the hills and high along the river.	6 types: 1. Rectangular single chamber tomb; 2. Single side chamber tomb; 3. Double-side chamber tomb; 4. Three-side chamber tomb; 5. Multiple-chamber tomb; 6. Irregular shaped tomb. The 'residential' function is salient. The sacrificial chamber is large, with multiple chambers in the rear.	Large scale family burial, with large amount of burial objects of various types. The chamber has drainage. The tunnel is long. The sacrificial chamber forms the front chamber of the family tomb.
Fu River area	Single chamber -multiple chambers. Most consist of tunnel, door and burial chamber.	Fu River area (central Sichuan Basin), along the Qi River. Red sandstone. Low tomb entrance.	6 types: 1. Rectangular single chamber tomb; 2. Single side chamber tomb; 3. Double-side chamber tomb; 4. Three-side chamber tomb; 5. Multiple-chamber tomb; 6. Irregular shaped tomb. Central pillars and coffin beds are often found in multiple-chamber tombs.	With pictorial carving and painting. The coloured paintings and carvings are usually in red and black. The carvings in the burial chambers have various content.
Southeastern Sichuan	Most are single chamber tombs. Multiple chamber tombs are very few.	Tuo River area (south Sichuan) and Yangtze River area (Jinsha 金沙 River and Min River). Red sandstone. Relatively high tomb entrance. Some are located on the wall of the cliff.	Appear in groups of single chamber tombs cut horizontally into the cliff, with short tomb tunnel, simple tomb structure. Multiple-chamber tombs are very few. Some reburials are found. Some Song and Ming dynasty cliff tombs are found in the Nanguang River-Shicheng Mountain area.	Influenced largely by western Sichuan cliff tombs, and Sichuan-Yunnan and Sichuan-Guizhou cave burials. There is few interior decoration.
Chongqing area	Most are single chamber tombs.	Yangtze River and Jialing 嘉陵 River areas. Some are located in the Danxia 丹霞 landform area. Most are red and gray sandstone. Tomb entrances are relatively low on the hills and high along the rivers.	Most are grouped single chamber tombs; with short tunnel, simple structure. Double-chamber tombs are very few.	Influenced largely by western Sichuan and southern Sichuan cliff tomb structure. There are few relief carvings and decorations.

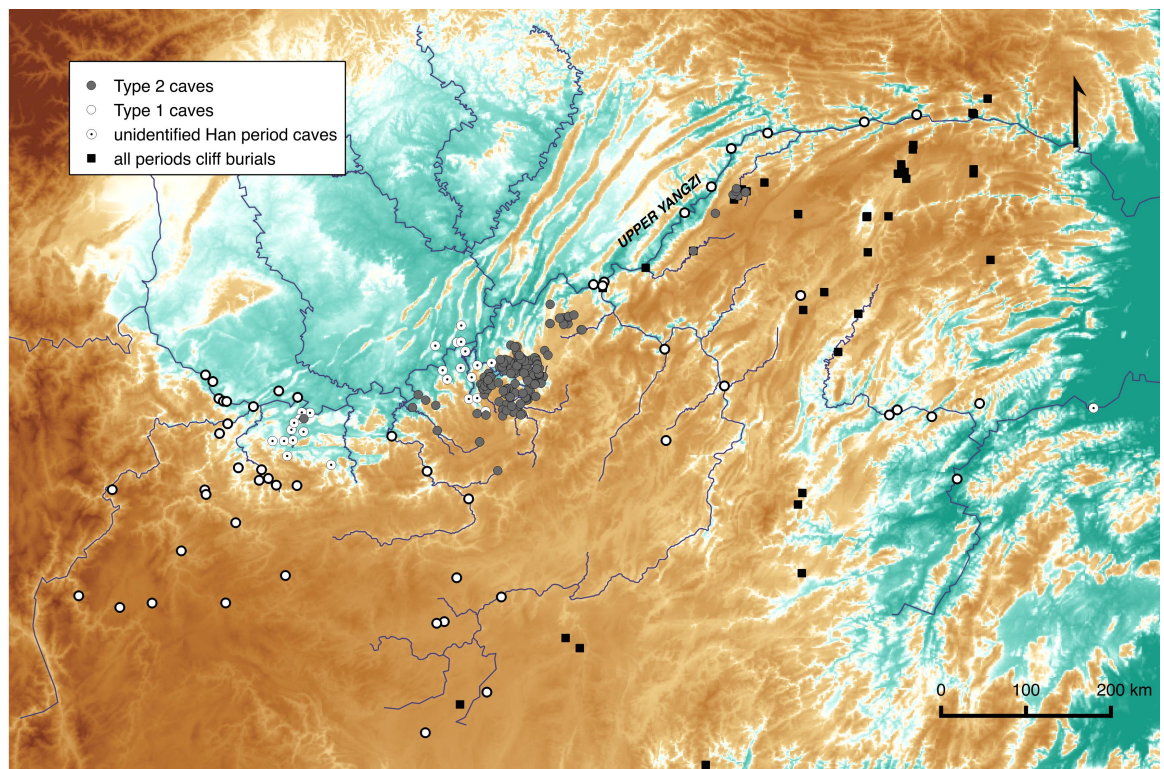
3.6. Typology by area in Southwest China. Source : Fan Xiaoping 2006:67 translated in Chen Xuan 2015:25.

As introduced in the previous Chapter, Type 2 caves south of the Yangzi appear relatively late, between the end of the 2nd century CE and the beginning of the 3rd century CE. The caves are placed high above ground, single cavity and of small

¹⁸ Only one single find of a moulded brick is reported for the whole Qi River area. The situation is similar in all surveyed counties south of the Yangzi.

dimensions. As we will see in Chapters 4 and 5, these small volumes can form different shapes, sometimes reduced to a simple niche. Type 2 caves have no alley or corridor leading to the entrance, but the cave threshold is enhanced with recessions. No trace of sealing is found on the cave openings, which are exposed to the gaze of passers-by, and inscriptions or depictions are line carved directly on the outdoor cliff face. No reference to the domestic sphere is apparent from the depictions, but partial reference to Han cosmology and mythology are perceptible.

Typology is central to this study; the use of provisional categories (Type 1/Type 2) that differentiate the caves south of the Yangzi (Type 2) from other Han period cliff tombs in Southwest China (Type 1) is meant to facilitate the direct investigation of contrasting burial traditions during survey (**Fig.3.7**). What is at first a simple contrast between typologies will be reinforced by contrasting locational, technological and cultural choices (visibility, accessibility, and iconography). The study needed to exclude part of Han period caves for which I was not able to obtain sufficient typological information, as well as cliff burials from earlier or later periods, which extend on a much wider geographical area.



3.7. Type 2 caves, Type 1 caves, unidentified Han period cliff tombs, and other period cliff burials south of the Yangzi.

In Chapter 6, section 5, a detailed report of my experiment in replicating a cave is given, which alleviates the Type 1/Type 2 contrast used along the thesis and looks for technological peculiarities of rock-cutting in sandstone that lead to specific cultural choices.

3.3.2 Epigraphic inscriptions

The epigraphic material associated with Type 2 rock-cut burials refer to a datable time frame and provide us with an indication that the tomb builders were somehow part of the Han Empire's cultural sphere. For some inscriptions, published rubbings are available, but they are often of poor quality, resulting in controversial readings from a handful of sources.¹⁹ The inscriptions on cliffs do not exceed 45 characters, with an average length of 13 characters. Compared to epigraphic inscriptions on stelae, or to ink inscriptions, their content is short, simple and repetitive. Like the majority of excavated texts, these short sentences are not samples of literature, but they are closer to administrative documents or lists.²⁰ Accordingly, their grammar and lexicon are standardized and suggest a fixed matrix to be filled in with the required names.

At the level of analysis in Chapter 7, section I compare epigraphic evidence from Type 2 caves to inscriptions associated with Type 1 cliff tombs in the Sichuan basin, as well as elsewhere in Eastern Han tombs, both in terms of content and calligraphic style.

3.3.3 Carved depictions

Depictions south of the Yangzi are mostly simply incised, and often placed outside the caves, on the bare cliffs. Just like inscriptions, outdoor line carvings are much more commonly encountered than what published archaeological atlases lead us to think.²¹ In most of the sites I have visited, I was able to find previously unrecorded depictions, both sizeable single figures on outdoor cliffs and more discrete geometric dressing patterns. Even when a depiction is reported, no reliable description is available. This is true for the 75 reported images located in 38 sites among the 102 Qi River sites. The inventories only provide vague descriptive terms such as "tower", "bird", "fish", etc.,

¹⁹ An appendix to Chapter 7 compiles published and surveyed inscriptions in rubbing or photographic reproduction, with translations and annotations.

²⁰ Goody 1977:79-80.

²¹ An appendix to Chapter 8 includes a catalogue of all surveyed depictions.

and they only occasionally mention the location and technique of the carved motif. Moreover, most geometric patterns found indoors are not reported. To compensate for this gap in knowledge, this study recorded all carved figures encountered during survey, paying attention to their position within the composition of the cave walls or the cliff faces. The carvings constitute a rich and still intact source of evidence, which is, as is the case for so many regional expressions of Eastern Han funerary art, still largely virgin of interpretations. Apart from the obvious problem of access and documentation, a major reason for the scholarly silence on the matter is the singularity of the carved depictions. The small number of depictions discourages the quest for an underlying logic in stylistic variations, be it chronological, geographical, technological, or a combination of these.

The aim of the visual analysis in Chapter 8 is to distinguish between the mimetic reactions of reduced culture contact, which can produce similar images but are deprived from their original meaning and context, and the higher degree of acceptance where the native group adopts the entire socio-religious mind-set of the incoming Han culture. The reach of mythical themes is crucial for evaluating the impact of Han funerary ideology south of the Yangzi. Among such major themes are the myth of the Queen Mother of the West, cosmological motifs such as the four cardinal/directional creatures, or core elements in the itinerary of the soul, such as the *que* towered gate. In the apparently unsystematic assemblage of motifs found on the cliff faces and the cave walls of rock-cut cemeteries south of the Yangzi, the shadow of the Han and its “predatory”²² visual culture is still perceptible. As seen from their margins, myth and cosmology only conserve their essential expressions, and their variants and adaptations vividly document the processes of culture contact on the frontier.

3.3.4 Transmitted texts²³

Little historical material is available about this area for the time period we are looking at for several reasons. Because it is both an imperial frontier and a geographic

²² Cullen 2000:248.

²³ See section 13.2 in the Bibliography for historical texts used in this study. An appendix to chapters 2, 4 and 5 entitled “Timeline” has a table gathering events falling within the time period and area of interest with source and translation.

boundary, inhabited by groups who did not produce their own written records, the area is located at the threshold of History. The contemporaneous official histories used in the previous chapter can do little more than set the wider stage of the area as seen from the eyes of the imperial centre. They provide a discontinuous narrative for the region. A mixture of direct and indirect reports only available for periods of major imperial activity in the area alternate with silent periods where even communication might have been unavailable. The northern frontier and internal struggles at the imperial capital constitute the main body of the Dynastic Histories. Despite the fact that as compared to Western Han campaigns, Eastern Han colonial endeavours are mainly aimed towards the South, little information is given on southern geography from contemporaneous sources.

The geographical administrative treatises in official histories such as the Hou Han shu for example probably written around 150 CE and contain information gathered around 145-6 CE.²⁴ A geographical treaty is structured as follows:²⁵

Name of Commandery + historical establishment + distance from the capital + number of Prefectures + sights, mountain, rivers, forests, swamps + iron and salt resources + gates + villages and military watchposts.
--

Apart from the Record of Lands South of Mount Hua (Huayang guo zhi 華陽國誌), which can be seen as a proto-gazetteer, one has to wait till the Tang to have the first exhaustive descriptions of the land and its inhabitants, and the rise of the “geographic annals” (fangzhi 方誌) genre, later evolving into the detailed “maps and annals” (tuzhi 圖誌) in Ming-Qing times. Compilations of gazetteers such as Byon’s for Southwest China, are helpful in tracing the same geographic entity through history.²⁶ Yan Gengwang’s synthesis of Tang period’ gazetteers also matches modern place and river names with their equivalent in ancient times.²⁷ Moreover, Yan analyses their respective importance as nodes and connectors in ancient trade networks. As a general rule, settlements mentioned in Chinese sources are all located along the main

²⁴ Beck 1990:187.

²⁵ Beck 1990:181.

²⁶ Byon 1979.

²⁷ Yan Gengwang 1986.

course of the Yangzi River, or on major axes such as the Chishui and Wu River, and can be matched with the archaeological evidence. Conversely, none of the Type 2 cemeteries investigated here lie beside sites mentioned in textual sources for Han times, but a few can be related to Tang period nodes of routes south of the Yangzi.

The network reconstructed in Chapters 4 and 5, partly from texts and partly from the archaeological evidence, provide a diachronic view on historical routes, rather than mapping their evolution through time. Only a rough periodization can be proposed: main tributaries and routes were opened since the Western Han, with Han Wudi iconic campaigns, while secondary routes were mainly settled under the Eastern Han. The network then shrinks, to be revived under the Tang, which also marks the beginning of proper gazetteers. Since my reconstruction follows a top-to-bottom approach,²⁸ the reconstructed geographies are visualized in terms of points and routes rather than regions or polygons. The tension between centralisation into administrative hierarchies and dispersal of settlement, with a large amount of blank space lying beyond or between the known cities and roads is typical of a colonized landscape.²⁹ According to Bol,

“the preference for points rather than polygons makes sense given the organisation of the administrative hierarchy: normally officials were centrally appointed only down to the county seat level, below which 'sub-bureaucratic' organisations of local inhabitants were created to collect taxes and labour. With only 3 or 4 officials in the county seat we might better conceive of administrative seats as outposts strategically located in a physical landscape of mountains and a human landscape of settlements’.³⁰

The use made of later gazetteers to reconstruct a “proto-historical” geography of the frontier in late Eastern Han times is based on the idea of a long-term consistency in the human use of the land. The written sources used in this study (epigraphy, contemporaneous and later transmitted texts) roughly cover the short, medium and long time scales of history as envisaged by Braudel. Here, funerary epigraphy is a direct witnesses of the lives of peoples, while official histories cover decades or centuries of economic, demographic or social history, and later texts build up a *longue durée* perception of slowly evolving mentalities, and persistent cultural values.

²⁸ Skinner (1985) theorized the link between the hierarchical regional systems of China and its historiography, creating the basis for CHGIS. www.fas.harvard.edu/chgis. see Wu Jiang et al. 2013:181.

²⁹ Given 2005:51.

³⁰ Bol 2005:253.

3.3.5 Bringing the data together at the level of sites

Given the deficit in factual information south of the Yangzi both from transmitted sources and occasional finds, cemetery sites are the most densely distributed evidence of human occupation for the area. The mass of silent caves, firmly integrated into the landscape, raises many questions. How do the cemeteries relate to the historical geography of the area; are these landscapes colonized, sacred, contested? Can the tombs be interpreted as a kind of roadside or boundary monument?³¹ Were the same people who were hired to build roads, the ones to build tombs for the newcomers and/or themselves? How does the Highland/Lowland dichotomy apply to the stone working traditions at hand, in both technological and cultural terms?

The following table shows how I tried to transfer the highland/lowland dichotomy to the dataset of rock-cut caves and coffins, roughly classifying them into a Type 1 and Type 2 working categories (**Fig.3.8**). Features from different scales of integrations are mixed in this table, departing from the general characteristics of terrain and hydrology, to the visible and walkable landscape. The next two scales included in this table belong to technological and stylistic concerns. A middle scale considers the caves themselves, their access, layout, including the presence of coffins. The very last-considered scale covers the depictions. The table below attempts a synthesis of geographic, technological and cultural attributes of the caves:

	Type 1	Type 2
Elevation	200-300m m.s.l.	600 to 700m m.s.l.
Position in Water network	Main course of the Yangzi or major tributary (Min river, Chishui river, Wu river, etc.)	Second or third order tributary of the Yangzi.
Visibility	Hidden or half-buried in sloping terrain. Corresponds to Han funerary ideology marking a strict separation between the living and the dead. Loot prevention.	Visible. Landmark. Visibility enhanced by height from ground of the tomb (from 2 to 20 m), and by the shadow of the recessed doors. Mostly riverside cliffs or boulders.
Accessibility	Accessible Ground level Sealed alley or corridors. Outer halls, wide open and accessible to the living, can connect corridors leading to tombs.	Apparently Inaccessible due to height above ground (2 to 20 m) 2 to 5m-high caves remain within reach. Some cases might have

³¹ Boundary stelae for example, have a very diverse audience: the literate urban elite versus the passing by illiterate muleteers. Given 2004:54-55.

		required scaffolding or climbing for excavating the cave, adding the depictions and lifting the deceased in. Possible addition of wooden structures fixed on the cliff, or erected next to it.
Cave Opening	Tomb alley or corridor (entrenchment). Presence of an alley in some cases due to sloping terrain, but also a major investment in energy. Entrance blocked by piling dirt or stones.	The cave opens directly on the outside. A recessed doorframe enhances the threshold. No sealing device (hinge, trench, etc).
Cave layout	Additional chambers and niches can be carved along the corridors. Addition of rock-cut architectural details (stoves, pillars, etc.). Long corridors possibly realized through mechanical means (ramming technique).	Single cavity. No niches are prepared for bodies.
Presence/Absence of coffins	Coffins: Central plain influenced cosmology. Systematic iconography. Quarried, better quality stone.	No coffins.
Depictions	Indoor sculpture and relief carvings. In some cases, decorated outer halls.	Outdoor line carvings. Indoor wall dressings.

3.8. Type 1/ Type 2 comparative table.

What is presented here as a highland tradition (Type 2) is located on the frontier of the Han Empire. Proceeding in a comparative way to define Type 2 caves allows one to seize dynamics of transmission and adaptation of certain motifs to different supports. The motifs are used to order the world in the cultural environment that originally produced them. But once one has abandoned the « plain cosmological order », what is the alternative, competing order? In this regard, this thesis does little more than investigate the terms of cultural negotiation, and suggest potential avenues for further study.

3.4 Research ethics

This section locates this research in the discipline of archaeology/art history in general as it is perceived today in contemporary China.

3.4.1 National heritage and frontiers

Much of my work in the field has been to share basic recording methods and techniques of lighting and photography, promote awareness of the cultural value of

the sites, and exchange experience of the area and topic with local archaeological officers. Part of my effort was also directed at challenging false information and demystifying the identity of the tomb builders, often made to appear more exotic than they probably were, for touristic purposes.³² For example, when it was officially open to the public in 2012, the site of Qigedong was “raised above ground”. Several metres of dirt were removed from the foot of the cliff and concrete plastered on the freshly exposed stone surface, subverting the original appearance of the site and endangering the stability of the cliff (**Fig.3.9**).



3.9. A view of recent modifications on the Qigedong site. Changning county, Sichuan province. 2012. The grey section of the cliff was unearthed and covered with concrete.

A “barbarian-style” suspended bridge was added to access the site from the motor road across the river. Following this trend, the local press disseminates the denomination “caves of the Lao people” (*Lao dong* 僚洞), reflecting the efforts of county level institutions who wish to exoticize their local heritage.

The archaeology of Chinese frontiers is a growing concern today, with the One Belt, One Road (*Yi dai yi lu* 一帶一路) directives implemented by the current government.

³² Gelao groups from Zunyi visit cliff tombs in Qijiang
<http://e.163.com/docs/10/2015102209/B6H344KA900144KB.html>;
 Han tombs in Qijiang, an important symbol of Tujia ethnic minority
<http://chongqing.163.com/16/0113/11/BD73GIKC02330O41.html> (last accessed 26/6/2017).

Concomitantly to these transnational views, political and academic moods in mainland China are more than ever focused on imagining a future for Chinese national archaeology and national heritage, or the archaeology and cultural heritage of China as a nation. This thesis has received strong logistic and financial support from mainland China academic institutions committed to the study of frontiers, such as the Archaeology department in Renmin University. It has also been supported by institutions that are traditionally concerned by the question of the boundaries of Chinese identity, such as the Chiang-Ching Kuo Foundation. It is hoped that navigating between these poles, this research can be continued, by integrating cliff burials and rock art south of the Yangzi that have here only been summarily surveyed.

3.4.2 Boundaries of the discipline: (history of) art and archaeology

In parallel to my last two years of research on cliff burials, a collaboration with cultural geographer and artist Rupert Griffiths entitled “Site_Seal_Gesture” pushed further the reflection led by this study on matters of research methods, heritage and interpretation.³³ Departing from the idea of proposing alternative ways to re-imagine unwanted heritage, or heritage considered “without value”, such as military defences in rural margins, or the cliff burials investigated here (**Fig.3.10**). Creative practices in Archaeology are just starting to be investigated, and it is hoped that this study is contributing to these emerging ventures.³⁴ The study of art history and archaeology, as well as heritage and museum studies are rapidly blooming in Chinese academic institutions today. They face a situation where art academies are the places where theory, critique and the history of art are taught, while departments of history and archaeology have a privileged access to both sites and artefacts stored in museums. Attempts are made to build bridges between schools and departments, and fill the gap between art and archaeology. The idea of fine arts archaeology (*meishu kaogu* 美術考古) is but one of the hybrid offshoot of these attempts. The rise of cultural heritage as a major is another potential disciplinary bridge. This thesis was written in a bilingual context, commuting between SOAS, Renmin University of China and the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, three academic institutions with different traditions of research and

³³ Wei and Griffiths 2017 (in press).

³⁴ The 8th edition of the World Archaeological Congress (WAC8) has inaugurated a new section entitled “Art and Archaeology”, with several sessions dedicated to cross-fertilization between artistic practice and archaeology.

teaching. Rather than coming from one academic environment in one institution to study the field in a foreign country, I was able to share my research in all three institutions, teaching on the anthropology of art,³⁵ cultural heritage³⁶ and cultural routes.³⁷



3.10. Guanyinsi site in Shizhu county, Fengdu district, Chongqing municipality. Estimated to date from the Song period (10th-13th century CE).

3.4.3 Metal and stone studies

Culturally specific ways to build bridges between the scientific tendencies of archaeology and the increasingly subjective endeavours of art history should be explored. Antiquarian practices such as metal and stone studies (*Jinshi xue* 金石學) have a lot to offer in the on-going debate on the position of the researcher in making the past, and on the sensorial dimensions of archaeology. During the exercise in replicating a cave in sandstone reported in Chapter 6, a first epigraphic inscription was added to Experiment 1, conveying information about the status and function of the replica and serving as an exercise in experimental epigraphy. Instead, the second

³⁵ “The history of Sinology and the study of East Asian art in the West”, Sichuan Fine Arts Institute 2014.

³⁶ “Comparing values in heritage interpretation, management and conservation”, Renmin University of China 2015.

³⁷ “The art and archaeology of the Silk Road”, SOAS 2016-2017.

inscription was traced into a layer of fresh concrete in front of Experiment 2. **(Fig.3.11)**. It recounts in a few words the purpose of the experiment among a series of past and existing interpretations produced by the viewers of Eastern Han caves after their original function was forgotten:

魏離雅造石室
非為葬先人
非是仙人居
非是土民蠻子洞
乃模古考之。

Lia Wei created a stone chamber.
It is not meant to bury ancestors,
Neither is it the dwelling of immortal beings,
Nor “wild tribes” caves, as local people call them.
(This cave was built) to study the past by replicating it.

The inscription replaces the researcher, myself, in the process of making a cave. My own endeavour in studying and interpreting the past is here replaced in the lineage of original, historical and popular or local interpretations of the rock-cut monuments, faithful to the antiquarian beginnings of experimental archaeology, and keeping a foot in the discipline of metal and stone studies, or Chinese antiquarianism.



3.11. Writing inscription no.2 in Banan district, Chongqing municipality. June 2015. Source: photograph by Rupert Griffiths.

3.5 Summary of methods and limitations of this study

A separate chapter devoted to fieldwork methods is relevant in this thesis to convey how a “step-by-step” fieldwork strategy worked in step with evolving research questions. Starting from a broad comparison between the caves south of the Yangzi and their homologues in the Sichuan basin and Yangzi gorges, the thesis then evolved into a much-localized case study in a single southern tributary of the Yangzi. Finally, the research grows back to an interregional scale, looking at the whole network of southern tributaries that connect the Yangzi to the Yunnan-Guizhou highlands. The layers of preliminary conclusions produced in the process indicate just how unstable a typological or locational interpretation of the material can be when submitted to verification on the field. This study innovates by opening up an area considered marginal in the study of Eastern Han cliff tombs, it verifies typological or chronological classifications and given cultural interpretations, some of them dating several decades back, and when those are proved wrong, it proposes alternatives. Crucially for this chapter, the most valuable findings contributed by this study to the knowledge of Han time’s burials in artificial caves are directly related to the way field survey was scaled and re-oriented throughout the years, as interpretations needed new ground. Problem-oriented fieldwork constitutes a major advantage of this research as compared to previous studies.

During my own data collection, I have tried to avoid repeating the mistakes uncovered in existing records, and maintained a critical attitude towards innovative recording technologies. Regarding the total sample of sites and caves, decisions taken at the level of sampling, selection of sites to be surveyed, and of case studies, are kept as transparent as possible. On the other hand, in some occurrences such as the recording of the carving experiment, the photographic coverage of the caves and carvings, as well as the reconstruction of a section of the Qingxi tributary, with the intention of building around and enriching the data, an overload of information was produced. While the need for a narrative is unavoidable, it also means that a selection has to be made on the collected data, unless one wants to be as exhaustive as “The Man Who Collected the First of September, 1973”.³⁸

³⁸ Bringsvaerd 1976:79.

“He neglected friend and relatives, and when he met one of them in the street (going to or from his office) he found it hard to carry on a sensible conversation. He grew more and more appalled at how little people knew of the 1st of September 1973. . . . The Subject turned out to be just about inexhaustible. Who would have guessed that so much had happened on exactly the 1st of September 1973?”

The same logic applies to the surveyed field, appropriate scales had to be retained, and the resolution was often degraded, to avoid producing a map as big as the Empire itself, as in Borges’ story:

“...In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.” (Suárez Miranda, *Viajes de varones prudentes*, Libro IV, Cap. XLV, Lérida, 1658)³⁹

In the field of humanities, new methods are tested often without a full grasp of their theoretical implications, or without an understanding of their practical limitations and functionalities. Researchers who uses innovative tools of enquiry is easily criticized for privileging the “how” rather than the “why”. During the research conducted here, both theoretical problems of spatial analysis in archaeology and the practical problems of obtaining spatial data from the field were experienced. Although the thesis makes little direct use of the practical applications of spatial analysis in archaeology, the concerns raised by that method have informed the multi-scalar way in which the fieldwork and the whole thesis are structured, the very idea of the frontier, as well as the aspects of funerary ideology investigated here. In other words, in this study, the “how” led the way towards the “why”, while the methods that were effectively used remain traditional. Importantly, this research was designed as departing first from the ground, in terms of spaces and topographies, and used maps in a selective, conscious way.

³⁹ Borges (1960) 1998:325.

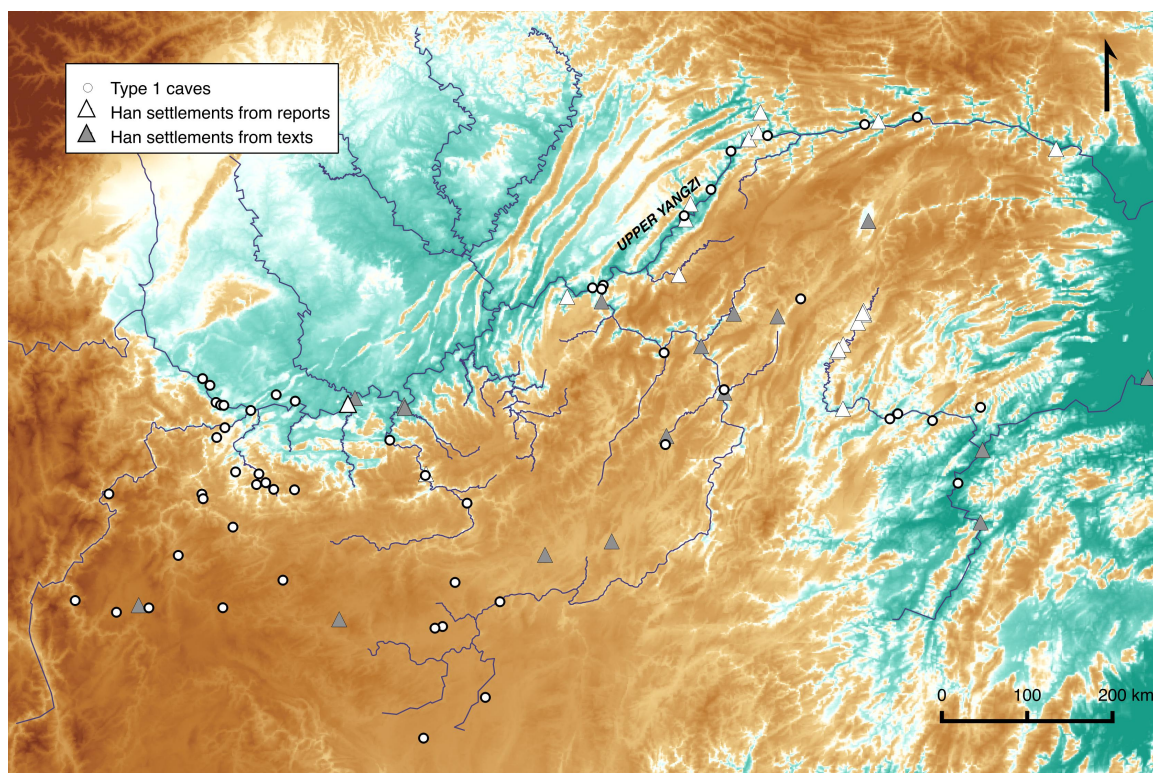
Difficulties encountered and unsolved issues, which prevented me from formulating definitive statements, mainly concern the lack of settlement evidence and the incomplete nature of the available data. These issues are mainly dealt with in the following Chapter 4. Despite recent discoveries of settlements such as Huangjinwan, pushing further than ever our knowledge of Han colonization south of the Yangzi, these can still only be related to the minority pool of Type 1 tombs south of the Yangzi. A closer look to the distribution and the typological composition of Type 2 cemeteries is currently the only way to produce a hypothesis on corresponding Type 2 settlements. This research aim is addressed in Chapters 3 or 4, when finer relationships between cemetery typology and the historical role of smaller tributaries are proposed. The lack of any funerary artefact or entombed body prevents us from giving a full image of the burial practice at hand. What the material remains allow us to study, are only selective traces of an action, in other words, an indirect access to the agent.⁴⁰ We do not have access to the total funerary rite, which may have unfolded in many stages and in different locations, with displays that have left no traces, but we do have access to what is left of its infrastructure.⁴¹ Lastly, the dataset brought together here is sizeable in quantity, but is not homogeneous in quality, and runs the risk, with its funerary focus, of not seeing a full picture. Diversifying my methods of analysis therefore was, as the above should make clear and later chapters will elaborate, a necessary step towards a wider understanding of the phenomenon.

⁴⁰ Bloch 1971.

⁴¹ Bloch 2010.

4. Contextualizing Type 1 caves in the Upper Yangzi region

If we think of the three most often considered components of landscape archaeology, namely landscape resources, settlements and cemeteries, it is noteworthy that the data available for Type 2 burials covers only one: cemeteries. Incomplete datasets with a focus on funerary data are commonplace in Chinese archaeology. Consequently, this chapter compensates for the lack of context for Type 2 caves by gathering all available data for the fraction of Type 1 cemeteries and settlements that are located in comparable settings. The latter include three areas that form the upper Yangzi region: the Three Gorges area, the southern part of the Sichuan basin, and the fluvial routes connecting plain to highlands (**Fig.4.1**). Han period settlements encountered during survey, when skimming through published archaeological reports or when reading historical descriptions of routes surrounding Type 1 sites are marked on the map below. This list is by no means exhaustive, as many more Han period settlements are known along the Yangzi, and the location of towns encountered in texts remains an approximation.



4.1. Type 1 cemeteries, Han period settlements from reports (exact location) and settlements from texts (approximate location) south of the Yangzi.

Section 1 focus on the peculiar environment of Three Gorges area. Here, intensive rescue archaeology at the scale of a whole ecotone has produced a wealth of published material, where Type 1 cemeteries are located with respects to settlements and topography in a *longue durée* perspective. This is the closest we can get to the context of Type 2 cliff tombs south of the Yangzi. Section 2 focuses on Han tombs in the southern Sichuan basin, showing the variety and freedom reached by provincial traditions. Section 3 reconstructs main southwards axes of trade and communication established under the Han. It does so by combining the results of my own survey, records kept in county-level archaeological offices, known Han period settlement sites as well as information on ancient routes, rivers and place names from textual sources.

An appendix to Chapters 2, 4 and 5 entitled “11.1.Timeline” provides the detail of historical events, names and place names mentioned in the text (hereafter: Timeline + entry number).

4.1. A canyon-and-plateau setting: Limited resources in the Three Gorges area

This section points at the peculiarities of land use in the upper Yangzi region, with its typical canyon-and-plateau conformation.

4.1.1. Geology of the Three Gorges area

The Yangzi gorges area is isolated from the north by the Daba mountain range 大巴山, from the south by the Dalou mountain 大樓山 and the Wuling mountain ranges 武陵山. This peculiar geological formation is the result of three tectonic events, starting 70 MYA, when part of the ocean became an inner sea, now the Sichuan basin. What was its shore folded into three anticlinal strata to form great crests (Cuitangxia 瞿塘峽, Wushan 巫山 and Huanglingmiao 黃陵廟). About 40-30 MYA, the pressure of the Himalayan plate produced cracks in the three massifs. Finally, by its eroding activity, the Yangzi River carved its way to the ocean, cutting deep gorges through the Wu mountain range.¹ The gorges cut an east-west corridor, providing a unique way through impenetrable mountains.

¹ Three Gorges 2009:4.

The resulting topography is almost 90% mountains and hills, while flat land remains a rare resource. Numerous rivers run in narrow and deep gorges between high mountains. Consequently, a crucial challenge in the area is circulation and communication, with isolation and particularism being the rule in Neolithic cultures. Space itself, and one's location in the river network, was a valuable resource. Secondly, as many riverside fields only seasonally emerge from the waters and because of the turbulent activity of the Yangzi, little arable surface is available. Consequently, the development of agriculture and population growth was slow. In compensation, other sectors developed intensively, such as trade, salt extraction, and fishing. The Three Gorges inhabitants maintained a local autonomy for basic goods, but resources such as salt, copper, cinnabar, lacquer, tea, ramie (*zhuma* 苧麻, the fiber crop *Boehmeria nivea* also known as "China grass"), acquired an increased importance, fuelling trade and war.

In the canyon-and-plateau mountainous settings, settlements could only use two types of flat land : the *ping* 坪 and the *ba* 壩 (**Fig.4.2**). The *ping* are higher terraces located on the floodable riverbanks of seasonal streams. Forming the basement of these terraces, are the cliffs in the side of which most cliff burials are cut. The *ba* are lower alluvial plains resulting from the accumulation of sediment brought by the rivers. Throughout history, towns and administrative centres chose this kind of terrain, often strategically placed at the confluence of fluvial routes. Extracting activities and war easily altered such a fragile environment. By the end of the 2nd century CE to the early 3rd century CE, right when rock-cut cemeteries flourish south of the Yangzi, both the documentary and the archaeological evidence show that the factors of ecological imbalance, which often stands among the causes for Imperial collapse,² are reunited in the Three Gorges area.

² Ponting 1996.



4.2. A canyon-and-plateau landscape along the Long River. Fengdu district, Chongqing municipality.

4.1.2. Transportation

Textual sources mention a few facts about navigation in the Southwest.³ The road from Sichuan to the Central Plains via water is said to follow a north-south axis formed by the Jialing and Han River valleys, ultimately reaching the course of the Yellow River. In the late Bronze Age, the Min and Tuo River are reputed navigable in the Sichuan basin. Along the east-west axis of the Yangzi gorges, historical accounts focus on the Qing River 清江, in the middle course of the Yangzi. The Qing River runs parallel to the Yangzi, but it is reputed more easily navigable. Neolithic sites are found in the middle and lower Qing River, which is presented as the potential place of origin of the Ba. Mythical accounts narrate that the Ba king invented “earthen boats”, which use to navigate on the Qing River.⁴ Instead, when Qin attacks Chu in 308 BCE, it is through the Wu River.⁵ For their military enterprises, Qin used catamarans, which are stable and can transport heavy loads: such boats could transport 50 soldiers and three months of food supplies.⁶

Archaeologically excavated boats are canoe-like dugouts, adapted to the navigability of most narrow and seasonal rivers in the area. Boat-shaped coffins are found along the course of the Yangzi River, from Sichuan to Fujian Provinces. The coffins are “carved out from one of the two halves of a single trunk, measuring from 4 to 6m in length (...);

³ As they exceed the scope of this thesis, the information below is summarized from Chapter 9 in Three Gorges 2009:330-349. Direct references to historical texts are given for the Han period onwards.

⁴ Timeline 1.

⁵ Timeline 3.

⁶ Timeline 4.

the two ends are carved upward, thus resembling the shape of a boat, with two holes at both sides used to tighten a rope and lower the coffin into the pit.”⁷ More than 30 boat-shaped coffins were excavated in 2000 in Shangyejie, Chengdu City,⁸ the longest one reaching 18,8m in length. The earliest radiocarbon dates in South China are for the Mount Wuyi boat-shaped coffins in Fujian Province (3840±90 BP),⁹ and the Guixi site in Jiangxi Province (2595±75 BP).¹⁰ Burials in suspended coffins on riverside cliffs are not boat-shaped, but the coffins are also dug into cylindrical or squared tree trunks. Coffins made of assembled wooden planks are less common. The distribution of burials in suspended coffins on the Yangzi River main course is concentrated in the 190km between the first gorge in Fengjie (Cuitang gorge) and the last gorge in Yichang (Xiling gorge). More suspended coffins are located on direct tributaries of the Yangzi. C14 tests from fragments of a coffin in Guancaiyan in Yichang municipality, Hubei province, date the coffins to 2270±80 BP,¹¹ and bronze artefacts found in Fengxiangxia suggest a late Warring States to early Western Han date.¹²

The canoe-like boats most probably sailed only during the flooding season. Terrestrial routes played a complementary role, the best example of it being riverside paths used to track boats upstream (*xiandao* 纖道). When no terrestrial path is running along the river, such boats could only operate in the downstream direction. As most riverbanks are not wide enough to accommodate paths, “plank roads” (*zhandao* 棧道) had to be cut in or attached to the riverside cliffs. The term *zhandao* can be traced back to the Zhangguoce 戰國策, where they are said to run for thousands of *li* towards Shu.¹³ In the Shiji 史記, the *zhandao* network is described as pervasive and extended in all directions.¹⁴ Plank roads connecting the Sichuan basin to the north such as the Baoxie route (*Baoxie dao* 褒斜道) played an important role in early imperial history. The Baoxie route was probably initiated between 337 and 251 BCE, before Qin unification,

⁷ Mengoni 2004:62.

⁸ Shangyejie 2009.

⁹ Wuyishan 1978:75.

¹⁰ Peking University 1978 and Guixi 1980.

¹¹ Dendrochronological dating is close (2275±90 BP). Shu Zhihai 1982. The date is discussed at the light of further discovered coffins in Yichang municipality, where the presence of silk and red sorghum show strong similarities with burial practices under the Song and Ming periods. Lu De Feng in Three Gorges 2003:311-312.

¹² Fengxiangxia 1978:91.

¹³ Timeline 2.

¹⁴ Timeline 5.

and covered a total of about 500km of plank footways.¹⁵ The governor of Hanzhong reportedly coordinated 2,690 people to build more than a hundred kilometres, with five bridges and 633 sections of plank footways. The workforce for the project ultimately reached 766,800 labourers and was drained from four commanderies.¹⁶ Cliff inscriptions are found along the route, commemorating its later improvement under local administrators, such as the “Stone Gate Eulogy” (*Shimen song* 石門頌; 148 CE).¹⁷

According to field survey,¹⁸ the paths were raised about 1 to 8m above water, above the level of seasonal flooding, and between 3 to 6m wide. The *zhandao* along the Daning River 大寧河 reached 32m above the water level.¹⁹ Footways were designed depending on the slope of the cliff. When located on floodable riverbanks or smooth slopes at the base of the cliff, they were supported by horizontal beams and pillars. Such structures needed two rows of holes in the cliff, regularly spaced, to fix in the beams. Wooden planks came on top of this support, with sometimes the addition of guardrails, bridges or pavilions. In Fengxiangxia, *zhandao* are found next to cliff burials, the two sharing obvious technical similarities (**Fig.4.3**).

Technological, visual and locational parallels between transportation modes and funerary customs such as between seasonal navigation and the boat-shaped coffins, the *zhandao* and suspended coffins, directly relate specific natural constraints and cultural expressions which characterize the Three Gorges landscape. These parallels foreshadow the effort made in this study to relate riverine routes to the display of identities while investigating the choices made by the builders of Han period rock-cut caves.

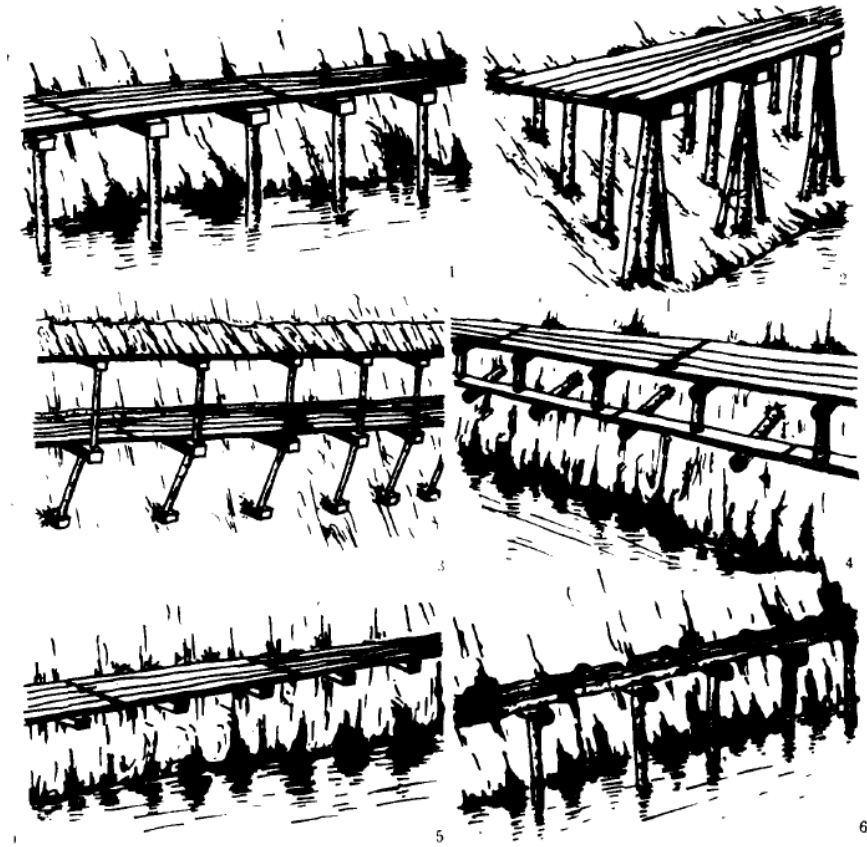
¹⁵ Tseng 2001:134-144 and survey report in Qin Zhongxing 1980.

¹⁶ Tseng 2001:137.

¹⁷ Translated in Harrist 2008:53-67.

¹⁸ In the last decade, to apply for the status of cultural route for the Tea Horse road, the local archaeological administration is surveying remains of tracks, bridges, etc. *Zhandao* are difficult to date due to their constant restoration, which depleted after the Song dynasty because of deforestation and shortage in wood resources.

¹⁹ See Cheng Diyu 2007 for a survey of 115m of *zhandao* along the Daning River.



4.3. Suspended paths. Source: Lan Yong 1992:71.

4.1.3. Settlements in the Three Gorges area

Not quite corresponding to the image of pioneers on a wild frontier inhabited by barbarians, De Crespigny describes colonization in the south as prioritising settlement over trade, administrative and military concerns, with primary concerns being the implantation of paddy field cultivation in the river valleys and on terraced slopes.²⁰ He differentiates between the topographic distribution of colonists and refugees: according to him, hilly areas naturally were left to the natives and Chinese refugees, while colonists took over the valleys.²¹ The main course of the Yangzi is more likely to have been inhabited by colonists. While this chapter will provide comparable material for major tributaries of the Yangzi, settlement evidence is lacking for minor tributaries, hilly areas surveyed in the next chapter which might precisely have been inhabited by a different type of settlers.

²⁰ De Crespigny 2004:51.

²¹ De Crespigny 2004:7.

Four types of settlements are found in the Upper Yangzi area in decreasing order of importance and scale: commandery seats, county seats, villages and outposts:²²

(1) **Commandery seats** are located on the Yangzi main course, or on its major tributaries. Their main function was military, and they would choose strategic locations, such as gorges (for example Baidicheng 白帝城, in present-day Fengjie district, Chongqing municipality) or plains located at the crossing of rivers (such as Jiangyang, in present-day Luzhou city, Sichuan province). Commandery seats were fortified and possessed beacon towers (*fenghuo tai* 烽火台) forming an alert system to protect the smaller settlements around.

(2) **County seats** are also located on the Yangzi main course, or on its major tributaries. They generally avoid the crossing of rivers for flooding reasons. Equally fortified, they prosper on salt or other trade goods. Workshops and cemeteries are found out of the settlement enclosure. Such centres multiply in late Eastern Han and are more densely distributed over the territory. This is part of a fragmentation process noted in Chapter 2, which continues well into the 3rd century CE.

(3) **Villages** are usually groups of small houses, engaged in small-scale production. In the late Eastern Han, village-level settlements reach second and third order tributaries of the Yangzi River.

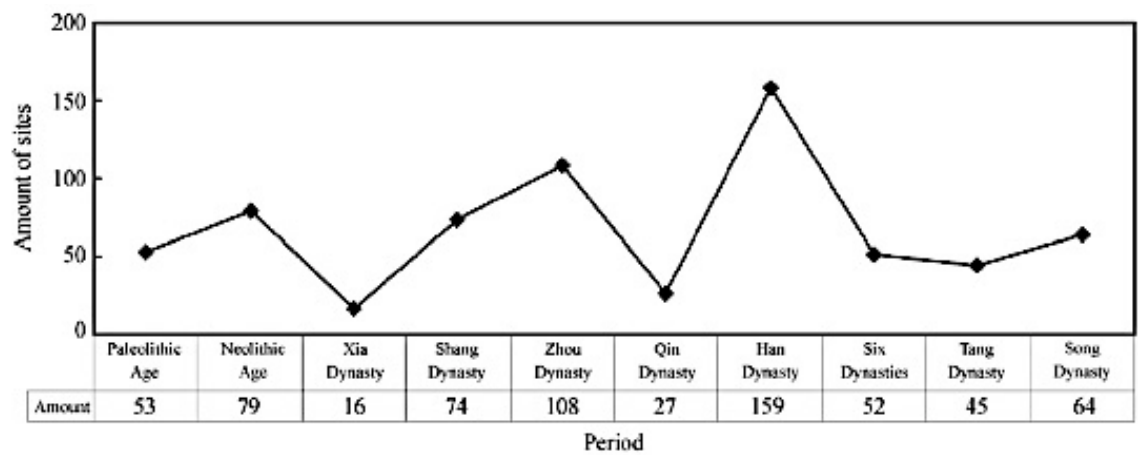
(4) **Outposts**: Some villages acquired an important role as post stations (*yichuan* 驛傳) or staging posts on trade routes.

Mirroring processes of ecological pressure and demographic growth, the amount of settlements uncovered in the Three Gorges area for Eastern Han times is thrice as big as in any other period before and until the end of the 6th century CE.²³ The table reproduced below shows that the largest number of sites dates to the Han dynasty (Fig.4.4).²⁴

²² He Shiwei 2011:87-90.

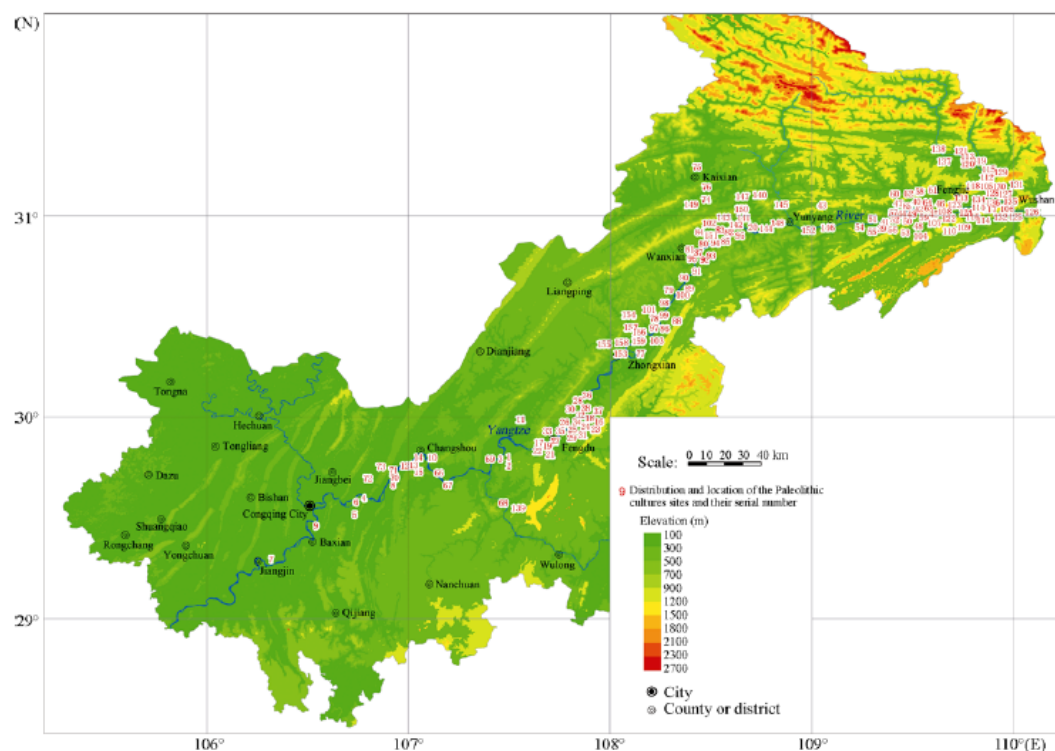
²³ See table by He Shiwei 2011:78.

²⁴ Zheng Chaogui et al. 2008.



4.4. Variation in the number of sites for all periods until the Song period (13th century CE) in the Three Gorges area. 46 sites were occupied only during Han times, with 155 sites overlapping with other periods Source: Fig. 11 in Zheng Chaogui et al. 2008.

According to the time series for the distribution of archaeological sites reproduced below from the same study, while Pre-Han settlements are found mostly in a limited area between Zhongxian and Wushan in the Three Gorges, in Han times settlers spread more evenly along the main course of the Yangzi, and upstream its main tributaries (Fig.4.5).



4.5. Distribution of Han period archaeological sites in the Three Gorges area. Source: Zheng Chaogui et al. 2008:115.

Another salient characteristic of Eastern Han times are increasingly marked regional differences in settlement patterns and funerary typology. In terms of settlement and burial typology, the gorges split in a western and eastern section. In the west, up until the mouth of the Wu River, most settlements are grouped along tributaries, with villages dispersed both on the riversides and in the mountains. Cliff tombs are very popular, so are brick tombs, but no assembled stone tombs are found. In the east, between the mouth of the Wu River to Baidicheng, all three types of settlements are represented, at the commandery, county and village level, but they are less clustered. Here, burials in brick chambers, assembled stone chambers or built in mixed assemblages are more popular, cliff tombs being almost absent, and a new type of burial, urn burials, is often encountered.

When after the Han, the Yangzi area registers a sudden drop in population, with strict policies applied on non-Han groups and economic restrictions, a big portion of migrants is headed towards the Hunan-Hubei plain, or the middle course of the Han River. The influence of the lower Yangzi civilization will get stronger under the Jin and Southern Dynasties (4th to 6th centuries CE), when the influence of the Central Plains in the Three Gorges diminishes. Partly due to this eastwards migration and because urban populations took refuge in less exposed locations, where census did not occur, cities stop growing after the Eastern Han dynasty. Their superficies shrink, and so do cemeteries, where many tombs are re-used.

4.1.4. Ecological hazards in the Three Gorges area

As seen above, the Three Gorges project, extending over several years and over the whole course of the upper Yangzi, allowed long term studies to develop, refreshing the existing school of Chinese historical geography.²⁵ Archaeological research shows that profound modifications in the human use of the land in the area correspond roughly to late Eastern Han times. The increasing surface of settlements, traces of deforestation, salt mining activity and flooding tell of an increased ecological pressure on the small amount of arable land available along the Yangzi. Interestingly, this coincides with the moment when the practice of rock-cut burials is being brought in to the Three Gorges area from the Sichuan plain. Ecological pressure is analogous in other parts of the

²⁵ For an overview of studies in historical geography see Bao Maohong 2004.

Empire: by the Han dynasty, all forests of the North China plain were cut down, at the end of a millennium of clearance activity for farming, urbanization and mining purposes.²⁶

The climate in late Han times and beyond (especially in 280-289 CE) features cooler temperatures as compared to the Western Han period.²⁷ Natural disasters such as flooding are recorded in written sources²⁸ and detectable in the archaeological record.²⁹ Together with the crowding of riverbanks, this is one factor pushing settlers to higher elevation sites, both for settlement and cemeteries. The elevation of cemeteries in the periods preceding and following the Han is comparatively lower. The area will have to wait for a warmer climate after the Tang dynasty, to see the expansion of cultivated areas at comparable heights. In the latter half of the 2nd century CE, the rare flat areas adequate for settlements and subject to flooding register a sudden population decline corresponding with the collapse of the Han Empire. The “missing population” both in the archaeological and textual records suggest a change in subsistence, a sudden weakening of the administrative control of taxed populations, and migration movements.³⁰

The environment undergoes further changes after the Han period. Demographic pressure led to intense clearance activities (*shetian yundong* 畚田運動), in order to increase arable land, leading to severe erosion and the formation of new watercourses. The Pengxi River 澎溪河, a major tributary of the Yangzi, will change its course between the third and the 6th centuries CE, and the settlement site of Lijiaba 李家壩, reviewed in the next section, will become a secondary centre to Mingyueba 明月壩.³¹

²⁶ Elvin 2004:53 and 86 and Barnes 1999:107.

²⁷ Lan Yong 1998:40-42.

²⁸ Timeline 16.

²⁹ Traces of flooding are found in the stratigraphy of Shidibang 石地磅, Wanzhou district for example. Three Gorges 2000:806. See Zhu Cheng et al. 2008 for a transhistorical view on flooding in the Three Gorges area.

³⁰ Yao 2015: Table 6.3. cited from Fang Guoyu 1990:82-87.

³¹ Zoumaling 2011:3.

4.2. Type 1 cemeteries and settlements in the Three Gorges and Sichuan basin

4.2.1. Cemetery typology: Relation to settlements

Cemeteries respond to the same hierarchy as settlements, with county-level towns and villages as main categories. A single county-level agglomeration possesses several cemeteries, which are widely distributed on the outskirts of the settlement (Pingdu 平度縣, Quren 胸忍縣, Wu 巫縣 or Zigui 秭歸縣 counties for example). At the village level, cemeteries are smaller, located closer to the settlement, and often subdivided into clusters of tombs. Western Han period tombs are located near or inside settlements, on arable or constructible terrain, sometimes even in houses for the urn burials.³² As a result of the increase in the number and surface area of settlements in Eastern Han times, small-size graveyards start spreading on the sloping sides of hilltops, farther from riverbanks' settlements and cultivated fields. Smaller and densely distributed cemeteries are also explained by the increased importance of households or the smaller familial unit, as compared to the previous emphasis on lineage, leading to strictly bounded cemetery areas.³³ In the Yangzi gorges area, cross-generational burials are the most popular by the Eastern Han dynasty, when originally individualized tombs for couples and concubines, develop into cross-generational families.³⁴ In the late 2nd century CE, the population of existing small cemeteries is doubled (2 to 4 tombs), tripled (3 to 9) or quadrupled (3 to 12).

Several cemeteries along the Yangzi have been discussed in connection with settlements.³⁵ The major settlement of Lijiaba and one of its attached cemeteries, Zoumaling 走馬嶺, are both located on the Pengxi River, in Yunyang district. Lijiaba is notorious for its long, continuous occupation (from the second millennium BC to the second millennium CE) but like all other settlements in the Three Gorges area, it grows critically in Han times.³⁶ According to clay seals found on the site, Lijiaba corresponds to the Han period administrative centre of Quren 胸忍. The area was an important centre for salt production, with the earliest attested salt production in Yun'an 雲安, on

³² In Tudiwan 2006 and Linjiamatou 2001(2007), see Chen Yajun 2012.

³³ Han Guohe 1999 and Yi Zaisuo 1995.

³⁴ Jiang Xiaochun 2010:147-150. Also, conversation with Li Dadi from the Chongqing Heritage Center.

³⁵ Jiang Xiaochun 2010:132-147 for Lijiaba. Other important settlements are Laoguachong 老鵠沖, Shejiazui 佘家嘴 in Yunyang county 雲陽縣, and Shuangyantang 雙堰塘, Jiangdongzui 江東嘴 in Wushan county 巫山縣.

³⁶ Zoumaling 2011:233 and Lijiaba 1997 in Three Gorges 1997:207-243.

the Tangxi River 湯溪河.³⁷ Migrants were an important part of the workforce needed to supply the various stages of salt production (woodcutting, mining, processing, transportation).³⁸

Because of demographic pressure, and the small amount of flat land along rivers, cemeteries had to move uphill and expand. While the surroundings of Lijiaba has only Eastern Zhou and late Eastern Han tombs, Western Han to Early Eastern Han tombs move to Zoumaling, across the Pengxi River. The Pengxi River is part of the waterway network active in Qin-Han times, and which navigability is continuously attested for later periods.³⁹ The river was thus not an obstacle, and the settlement site yielded evidence of intense fishing activity. Zoumaling was located within a 5km catchment area, about an hour's walk. Li Yangfu, in his study on early towns and cities in the Three Gorges area, shows that the distance between a settlement and market town is also between 1 and 6km, and so is the distance between major towns, minor settlements and salt wells in Yun'an, for example.⁴⁰

4.2.2. Tomb typology: Relation to topography

As introduced in Chapter 2, the common structure of a tomb before Eastern Han times was a shaft, thus a rectangular pit dug in the soil, with a double coffin placed at the bottom. From the Eastern Han period onwards, brick or assembled stone chambers, with the addition of a tunnel linking the chamber and the outside, usually containing more than one body, become the rule. During this crucial change, all constituents of the burial space are reconfigured, including the position of body in the cave. The outer coffin is substituted by the chamber walls, the inner coffin moves to the side of the chamber rather than its centre, and the display of grave goods takes place within the lofty burial space. Tomb furnishings migrate from the body of the deceased to the tomb door, a ritual space of increased importance. Jiang Xiaochun convincingly shows

³⁷ Three Gorges 2001 Vol.1:xii.

³⁸ Not far from Zoumaling are the sites of Jiuxianping 舊縣坪 and the associated Matuo 馬沱 cemetery, another possible location for Han period Quren county seat town. As shown by a stele excavated in Jiuxianping retracing the ascendancy of Jingyun 景雲, who moved to Quren in the Three Gorges area in middle Eastern Han, an important migration route arrived here from former Chu. Suo Dehao 2006:62.

³⁹ Zoumaling 2011:239.

⁴⁰ Li Yangfu 2010:194 and 195.

a connection between the reconfiguration of burial spaces and the type of terrain chosen.⁴¹

In Zoumaling for example,⁴² early Western Han shaft tombs are on dug top of the hill. In the late Western Han period, tombs move to the bottom. Early and mid-Eastern Han tombs in Zoumaling are mostly of the rock-cut type. Some chambers have square groundplans, are decorated and furnished with grave goods, but most of them are cut in brittle sandstone on an irregular groundplan. Most tombs have wooden coffins with cross-like metal additions typical of the Three Gorges area.⁴³ Late Eastern Han tombs move back to the hilltop, they include brick chambers built on a sandstone ground, and because settlers had lost track of previous cemetery locations, they dug their burials into existing tombs.

Locational choices for burials with respect to the water courses thus change noticeably between the early periods up until Qin and Han times, when burials move from terraces on the riverbanks to high raised hills. Just like in Zoumaling, in early Western Han shaft tombs are cut in the flat terrain bordering hill slopes, oriented towards the east, thus the downstream direction of the Yangzi. Han tombs in the Three Gorges area are not aligned with cardinal directions as they are in other parts of the empire, but instead, they respond to the river direction and topography. By Eastern Han times, tombs progressively move to the hills tops and sides. Intermediary types between vertical shafts and horizontal trenches were recently found in Xinjin 新津, Sichuan province.⁴⁴ A few tombs in Xinjin start with a shaft dug on the hilltop, which then forms a 90° angle and turns into a horizontal tunnel. The junction between shaft and tunnel is often pierced after the completion of the tomb and prolonged so that it reaches the side of the hillock and provides access for sacrificial purposes or to add bodies in the chamber. Later Han are simply cut in the hillsides. A trench links the chamber to the outside and forms an entrance above the ground to the burial space. The tomb doorway, its threshold which is often long enough to be called a corridor, and the trench attached to the chamber acquire a new role in the display of grave

⁴¹ Jiang Xiaochun 2005:121-126.

⁴² Three Gorges 2001:608-625.

⁴³ Li Meitian 2014.

⁴⁴ Current excavation by Chengdu Municipal Archaeological Institute team under the supervision of Suo Dehao.

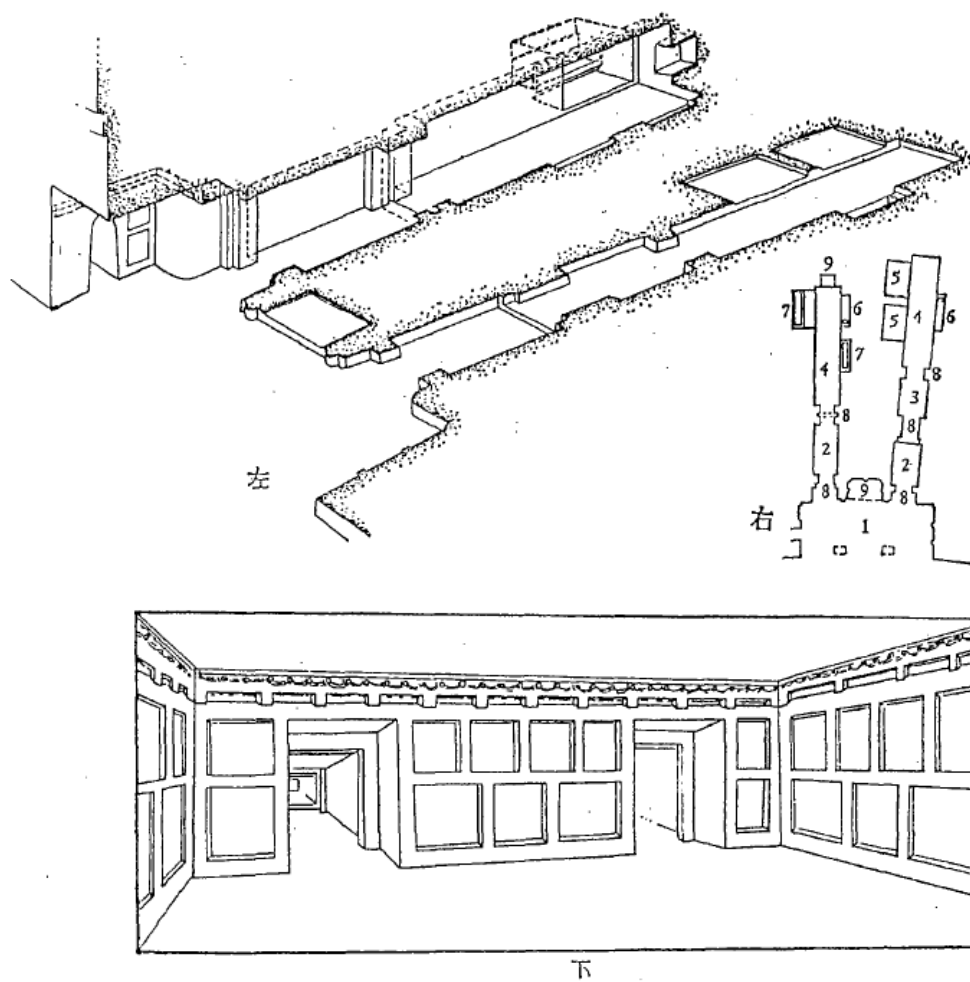
goods and as a ritual space. The trench leading to the chamber, however, is then filled in with dirt and rocks. The entrance of Type 1 caves is thus the combined result of technical necessity and functional innovation. As detailed in the following subsection, only in monumental tombs along the Min River did open antechambers, rather than trenches, provide an accessible space for the living at all times.

4.2.3. Open antechambers and decorated façades along the Min River

As compared to average burials located in industrial centres of the Three Gorges area such as Zoumaling, or attached to important agglomerations of the Sichuan basin such as Xinjin, tombs along the Min River were produced by wealthy families of the imperial province. This subsection focus on the open antechamber with decorated façade in Huangsan, which acts as a metaphor for palatial architecture.

Huangsan is located directly on the Min River, a major fluvial axis of the Sichuan basin, which enters the Sichuan plain through the ancient Dujiangyan irrigation system designed in Qin times. The Min River ends by joining the Jinsha River in Yibin, to form the upper Yangzi River. Several ensembles of rock-cut burials are known on the Min River course, among which the best known are located around Leshan 樂山. Tomb no.1 in Huangsan is the southernmost representative of Type 1 rock-cut chambers connected by a monumental open antechamber. Huangsan has hundreds of tombs of simpler craftsmanship, while brick tombs and stone coffins were also found in the vicinity of Yibin.⁴⁵ The layout of Huangsan tomb no.1 is a 12m wide rock-cut hall forming an open antechamber to the tomb, with an ornate facade facing the river (**See Fig.2.6**). The antechamber leads to three long corridors each followed by a burial chamber, similar to the example in **Fig.4.6**.

⁴⁵ Yibin 1955 and Yibin 1982.



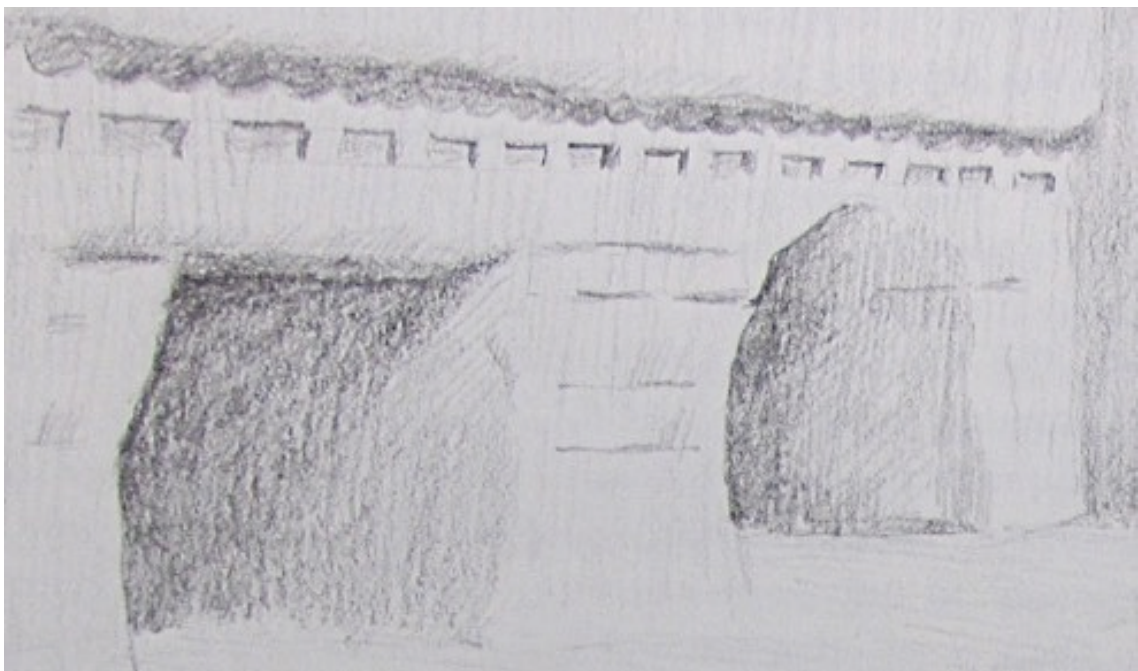
4.6. Split view and line drawn view of a rock-cut antechamber. Source: Luo Erhu 2001:150.

The inner spacer of the hall in Huangsan is prepared for three or four tombs to be cut in successively. While the walls of the corridors and chambers destined to be sealed after the disposal of the dead remained plain, the antechamber is decorated both indoors and outdoors. The wall treatment of the antechamber shows that the space was originally designed as a volume this size and divided in regular sections by a low relief pseudo-wooden architectural framework (**See Fig.2.6**). One tomb was visibly cut with some understanding of the pre-existing architectural framework. The two other entrances are cut straight into the wall decoration, regardless of the pre-existing reliefs. Huangsan is similar to rock-cut ensembles found in Leshan, 100km upstream the Min River, such as Xiaoba. In Xiaoba, one of the finest examples of rock-cut antechamber has sadly disappeared due to the construction of a highway bridge. The hall in Xiaoba was u-shaped, with the middle tomb having a much longer corridor, suggesting that the side tombs, of which one was left unfinished, swapped the corridor for an open extension to the existing hall (**Fig.4.7**).

The lofty antechambers, not lacking daylight and air, are strikingly visible from the rivers they overlook, and they do not appear to have been sealed at any moment. Instead, they remained open for the living, suggesting a commemorative function. The spaces have been considered by Fairbank as the south-western equivalent of ancestral offering shrines (**Fig.4.8**), the elusive *citang* 祠堂, which recent scholarship is still chasing in Northeast China (Wuliangci, Xiaotangshan, etc...).⁴⁶ However, as we will see in Chapter 8, different from the monumental examples in Leshan and Xiaoba, the antechamber in Huangsan has preserved its façade, which holds most of the ensemble's pictorial carvings.⁴⁷



4.7. Antechamber in Xiaoba. Chezi district, Leshan city, Sichuan province.



⁴⁶ Nylan 2008.

⁴⁷ A section is devoted to the antechamber in Huangsan in appendix 11.6.7.

4.8. Entrance to the vestibule of a rock-cut tomb in Leshan city, Sichuan province. Drawing by Faribank after Rudolph 1951. Source: Fig.4 in Fairbank 1942.

4.2.4. Decorated stone coffins in the Luzhou plain

Apart from the decorated façades along the Min River, most of the rock-cut tombs' decorations are located indoors, or on stone coffins. To illustrate this last aspect of the variety of carvings in sandstone found in Type 1 rock-cut caves, this subsection looks at stone coffins stored in caves in Luzhou city (former Jiangyang 江陽) and in the vicinity of Hejiang city (former Fu pass 符關). Although coffins were found in both areas, the cave typology is distinct.⁴⁸ It is proposed here that this distinction is related to the contrasting roles of Jiangyang and Fu in terms of administrative geography, trade and transportation.

The lower course of the Chishui River flows across the present-day Luzhou plain, which is the only extensive area of flat land south of the Yangzi. Jiangyang, on the location of modern Luzhou city, was previously part of Ba commandery 巴郡. It was made into the administrative centre of Qianwei commandery in 135 BCE. In 213 CE, Jiangyang gained importance and became a commandery of its own. At the confluence of the Yangzi River and the Tuo River 沱江 (former Luo 洛), which comes from the north, and crosses the whole Sichuan plain on a north-south axis, Luzhou always was a major fluvial port connecting western and eastern Sichuan. It had salt wells starting to be exploited in Western Han.⁴⁹ Its role endured until Song times, where it functioned as a local administrative centre and a stronghold of Han presence in the Southwest.⁵⁰

Under the jurisdiction of Jiangyang, downstream the Yangzi, was Fu county (Fu xian 符縣; 115 BCE), in present day Hejiang county.⁵¹ Historically, the function of Fu as a pass (*guan* 關) was to control the mouth of the Chishui River and the mountainous edges of the Luzhou plain. Beyond, it connected Sichuan to the Guizhou plateau. In 135 BCE

⁴⁸ As will be explained in Chapter 8, Fig.8.52 and 8.53, the decoration of stone coffins is a good example of how Han period iconography maintains stable spatial relations between motifs and symbols.

⁴⁹ Timeline 18.

⁵⁰ Throughout his monograph on the south-west frontier, Herman presents Luzhou as the major urban and trade centre South of the Yangzi in Song times. Herman 2009.

⁵¹ Timeline 28.

under emperor Han Wudi, when Tang Meng was made general, 10,000 men coming from Ba commandery crossed the Fu pass to reach the highlands south of the Yangzi.⁵²

According to Yan Manling,⁵³ 66 cemeteries with a total of 844 rock-cut burials are known in the territory of Luzhou municipality.⁵⁴ Most caves are cut in cliffs directly on the banks of the Yangzi River or on its tributaries.⁵⁵ The caves still extant today in the outskirts of modern Luzhou city were probably peripheral, since the modern urban area was built on the location of the Han period settlement.⁵⁶ Rock-cut trenches lead to cave openings, which remain invisible, and stone coffins are stored into the sealed caves, like in Longmatan (**Fig.4.9**). 41 stone coffins among which 25 are decorated, along with one fired clay coffin, one assembled brick coffin and two earlier wooden coffins,⁵⁷ were extracted from the caves and are now kept in the Luzhou Museum storage. The caves also have built-in coffins cut directly into the cave walls, along with rock-cut stoves and storage niches. Tomb furnishings include ceramics, metalwork and stone objects.⁵⁸ In contrast, in the vicinity of Hejiang, where more cave groups are preserved,⁵⁹ the caves are high placed. Coffins had to be lifted up and protrude from the cave opening, like in Yutiantang (**Fig.4.10**).

⁵² Timeline 19.

⁵³ Yan Manling 2008, 2009 and 2010.

⁵⁴ See also Atlas Sichuan 2009:194-238.

⁵⁵ Yan Manling 2009:88.

⁵⁶ Personal communication Yan Manling 2014.

⁵⁷ One stone coffin has a carved inscription dated 195 CE. Zou Xidan 2007.

⁵⁸ The discoveries in Jiangyang 江陽區三岩腦崖墓 1981; Longmatan 龍馬潭區夢仙亭崖墓 2002 and 龍馬潭區大驛壩木岩村崖墓 2007; Naxi 納溪區護國鎮永江村崖墓 2005 are cited in Yan Manling 2009. See also Hekoutou 2006.

⁵⁹ Zhangjiagou 1995.



4.9. Two trenches leading to the caves in Longmatan. Luzhou city, Sichuan province.



4.10. A high-placed cave with coffins in Yutiantang. Hejiang city, Sichuan province.

When comparing Longmatan in Luzhou and Yutiantang in Hejiang, we can see that each cemetery consists of a dozen caves, which were furnished with stone coffins. However, the typology of the caves and the way coffins are stored are quite different.

Yan Manling attributes this difference to the fact that Luzhou and its surrounding plain, although located south of the Yangzi, functioned as a sub-regional centre strongly connected to the Sichuan basin. In Hejiang instead, communication and transportation was made exclusively by boat, and privileged access led to the Chishui River through the Fu Pass.⁶⁰ The next section follows the Chishui River upstream, and other southward routes, to complete our definition of Type 1 tombs.

4.3. Type 1 cemeteries along major southward routes

This section synthesizes the information from historical accounts, settlement data and funerary evidence to draw a profile of Type 1 cemeteries south of the Yangzi and reconstruct the network of routes that connected the plain with the highland hub of Bi 髡, in present day Zunyi County, Guizhou province.

4.3.1. The Chishui River system (former *Anle xi* 安樂溪)

This subsection focuses on a section of the Chishui River 赤水河 (literally “Scarlet Water” because of its high sediment density) where Type 1 burials are found in relation to known Han period settlements, as this constitute the closest one can get in the present state of the field to the type of settlers which would have interacted with the builders of Type 2 cemeteries in nearby valleys.

Along with surface finds, which yielded almost exclusively mortuary evidence, settlements were recently found along the Chishui River. Among the southern tributaries of the Yangzi, the Chishui (former *Anle xi* 安樂溪) provides a direct connection from the Sichuan basin to the Guizhou Plateau.⁶¹ Unlike other major tributaries of the Yangzi, it is navigable throughout most of its course. Its deep, wide course and flat bed can accommodate large boats. The campaign led by General Tang Meng in 135 BC possibly followed this route, departing from Han civilizational centres in the Sichuan basin towards the semi-legendary Yelang 夜郎 tribal confederation. Its connecting role is further attested for the period between Han and Tang.⁶² The Chishui River was known as a major route southwards for salt trade, the Hema route (*Hemao*

⁶⁰ Timeline 19.

⁶¹ Timeline 58.

⁶² Yan Gengwang 1986:1094.

dao 合茅道). The Na River 納溪 to its west, which led to Bijie 畢節, played a comparable role in salt trade under the name Yongning route (Yongning dao 永寧道).⁶³

In the middle course of the Chishui River, where its bed gets wider and the elevation drops to 300-400m, habitable terraces rise to about 15m above the present-day water level. These *ba* are also designated by the terms “first level terraced riverbanks” (*yiji jiedi* 一級階地) in archaeological reports, to be differentiated from higher terraces (*ping*). In March 2015, a first large-scale surface rescue survey was led by the Guizhou Province Archaeological Institute in a 40km section of the Chishui River. Thirty-one sites have been identified, mostly settlements, with traces of occupation spanning from the Neolithic and the Bronze Age to premodern (Ming-Qing) times (**Fig.4.11**).



4.11. 31 locations identified by the surface survey in March 2015. Renhuai county, Xishui county and Chishui city, Guizhou province. Source: courtesy of Zhang Gaiké, Guizhou Province archaeological Institute.

⁶³ Zhang Herong 1996:147.

Han period presence was detected in 3 sites, all grouped in Tucheng district, Xishui county: Huangjinwan, Baozhai and Miaoba. These are the only Han settlements discovered in Guizhou to fill the gaps between plain centres such as Jiangyang or the Fu pass, and Highland centres such as Bi.

Huangjinwan has a total surface of 40,000 sq.m., which makes it the biggest Han period agriculturalist settlement found to this day south of the Yangzi.⁶⁴ It is located at 400m of elevation, right before a 1,000m high mountain range, which the Chishui River crosses through narrow gorges to reach the Luzhou plain. The settlement is located on a terraced platform about 15m above the water level today, at the confluence of the Xiaohe tributary and the Chishui River. The fertile alluvial platforms formed at the confluence of these streams were ideal for settlers, and the yellow-brown sandstone cliffs facing the river on both banks were used to cut cemeteries in. The site has been continuously occupied from the late Neolithic (4500 BP) to the present day, with traces of Bronze Age, Early Imperial, Medieval and Premodern period activity. Bronze Age traces of activity already signal a strong connection between the course of the Chishui River and the Shierqiao culture in the Sichuan basin. Fragments of large flat tiles with a cord pattern and tubular tiles were found all over the site, along with a remarkable quantity of ceramic fishing weights. Domestic animal bones such as pigs, oxen, sheep, dogs, as well as fish and deer are found on the site. Agricultural tools such as iron ploughs (**Fig.4.12**) are typical of Western Han settlements in the Southwest.

Building typology along the Chishui River is relatively constant from the Bronze Age to the Han period. While Neolithic structures were half-buried in the ground, structures dated to the Bronze Age, had postholes of maximum 10cm of diameter. Most postholes individuated on the site that can be dated to Han times are between 10-30cm of diameter, the buildings are of similar sizes and the quadrangular structures are aligned to one another, with narrow passages of about 60cm left in-between. Only one structure dated to Han times is circular, and located closer to the river. The largest group excavated to this day is a group of a dozen quadrangular buildings (**Fig.4.13**).

⁶⁴ Excavations started in 2015, Materials are still being collected and this section is still being updated.



4.12. Iron plough (length 15 cm). Source: courtesy of Zhang Gaike, Guizhou Province archaeological Institute.

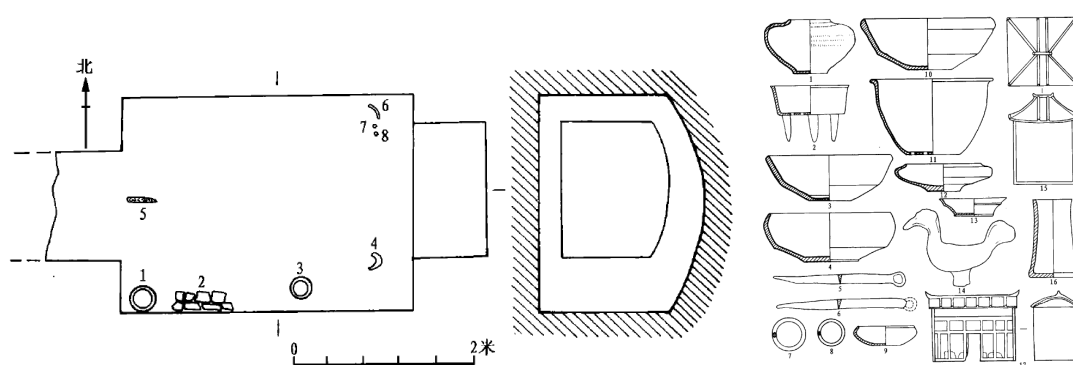


4.13. View of 3 quadrangular buildings delimited by postholes, Huangjinwan. Source: courtesy of Zhang Gaike, Guizhou Province archaeological Institute.

A remarkable fact in Huangjinwan is the variety of burial types. In chronological order, shaft tombs come first, closely related to the posthole structures. Early Han shaft tombs are located close by the structures, with some structures built right on top of the shaft (M4). Then come the urn burials, found in greater number, clustered with no apparent relation to the built structures. A few brick chamber graves are located on the other side of the river and in a side valley nearby. Finally, 8 cliff tombs are cut in the hills in direct proximity to the settlement site. Mainly based on the typology of excavated figurines, the cliff tombs were dated to the late Eastern Han and Wei-Jin

dynasties. The roughly moulded figurines include a large-sized horse and groom, smaller-sized water bearers, musicians, singers, birds, pigs, etc. Other typical Han artefacts are the bronze *wuzhu* 五銖 coins, a bronze bird-shaped pin (*daigou* 帶鉤) and iron tools such as an axe, and a ring-handled sword found in M23. In terms of cave typology, M7 is the only one to have a rock-cut stove, but all cliff tombs found in Huangjinwan have external trenches and built-in niches. M24 has yielded the remains of 3 ceramic buildings, each suggesting a different function: domestic, agrarian, and ritual. The miniature tiled roofs of the ceramic buildings, of two types, flat and tubular, resemble the tiles found in situ. The typology of the ceramic buildings also corresponds to the three types of postholes found in situ.

Before the excavation in Huangjinwan, several rock-cut cemeteries were known within a 1.5km radius around the site since 1994 in Wanyouhao, Fanjiazui, Yuanjiayou and Ruwei. In Wanyouhao, 15m from the Chishui River, rock-cut stoves were added to the caves. In Fanjiazui, bricks were used to seal the entrance, a ring-handled iron knife, copper *wuzhu* coins and bone remains were found. In Yuanjiayou, a rock-cut corridor lead to the chamber, where ceramic and metal artefacts, 2 models of a house, *wuzhu* coins, and an iron knife were found (**Fig.4.14**).



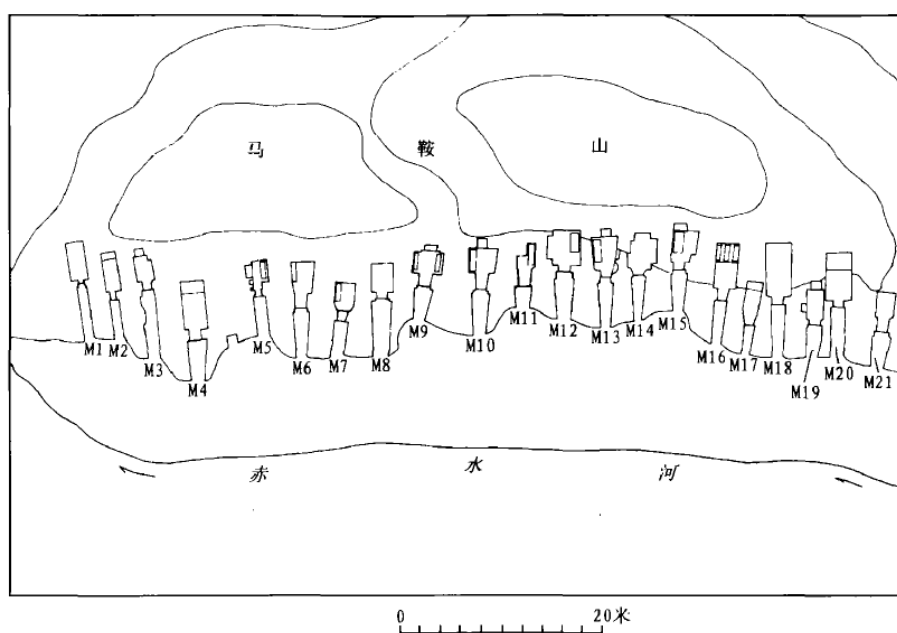
4.14. Groundplan of M3 and furnishings from Yuanjiayou. Chishui city, Guizhou province. Source: Zhang Herong 2002:93 and 95.

The closest cemetery to the plain, on the lower course of the Chishui River, is Ma'anshan. The site is located next to the ancient salt trading outpost of Fuxing 復興, which still boasts a sumptuous Qing dynasty Hunan traders guild. 21 caves are cut on a smoothly sloping sandstone hill facing the Chishui River, with wide long rock-cut trenches, narrowing towards the chamber opening. One of the caves features three

rock-cut coffins on a row. Decorated door lintels with rock-cut gourds and bracket sets (*dougong* 斗拱) are typical of Type 1 caves' decoration (Fig.4.15 and 16).⁶⁵



4.15. View of M1 and M2. Ma'anshan. Chishui city, Guizhou province.

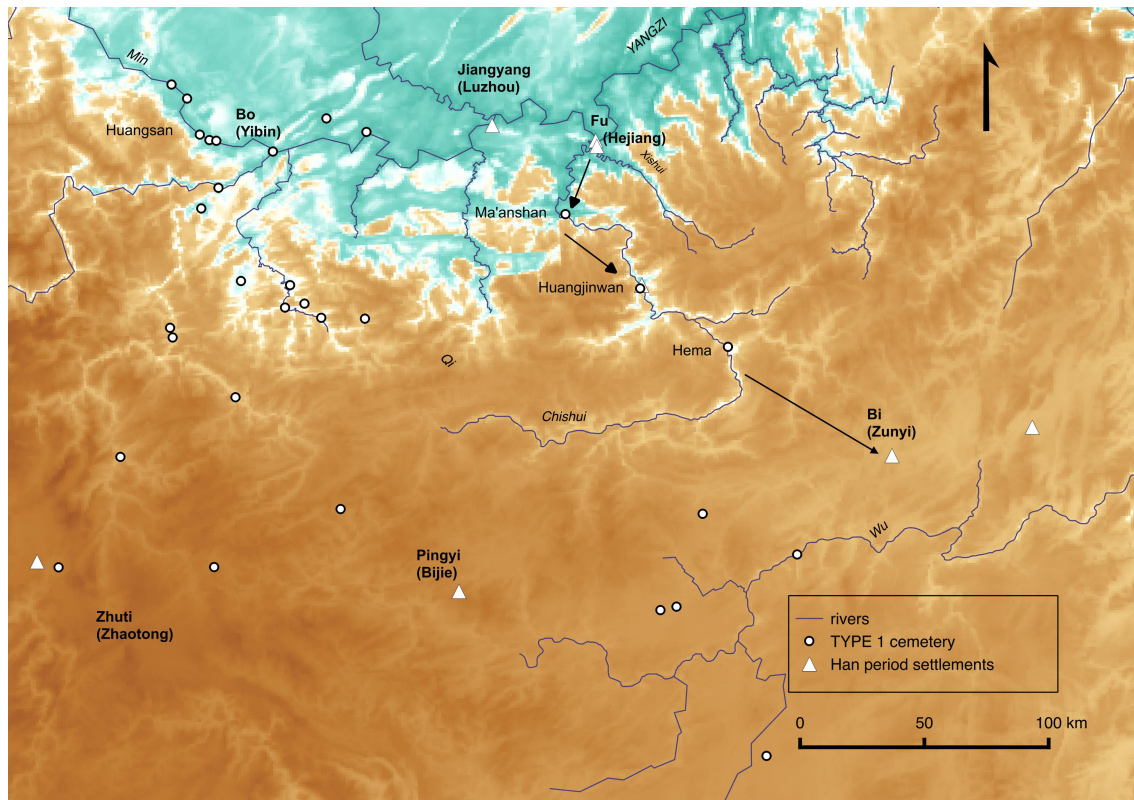


4.16. Ground plan of Ma'anshan. Chishui city, Guizhou province. Source: Zhang Herong 2005:21.

As a step between Huangjinwan and Bi, Zhang Herong identifies the Hema 合马 site, located upstream the Chishui River in present-day Renhuai county, Guizhou province. A settlement was found in Hema, covering about 10,000 sq.m. The site yielded a furnished late Western Han shaft grave (with 40 iron, bronze, ceramic artefacts, coins,

⁶⁵ The gourd, *dougong* and other motifs typical of Type 1 caves will be further defined and compared to their equivalent in Type 2 caves in Chapter 8.

etc.), and an Eastern Han brick chamber grave with figurines.⁶⁶ The general characteristics of the cliff tombs in Ma'anshan, Yuanjiayou, Huangjinwan and Hema are consistent with our definition of Type 1: long rock-cut trenches lead to cave openings, which remain invisible, and furnished with coffins, rock-cut stoves and grave goods which evoke the domestic sphere. Along with the settlements, these indicate that the Chishui was as a main penetration route in Han times for settlers from the Sichuan Basin into the Guizhou Plateau (**Fig.4.17**).



4.17. The Chishui River sites between the Fu Pass on the Yangzi River and the highland hub of Bi.

4.3.2. The Wu River system (former *Fuling* 涪陵)

The next important route connecting the gorges to the highlands was the Wu River 乌江, a major tributary of the Yangzi River formerly called *Fuling* 涪陵 (also known as *Ba Jiang* 巴江 or *Yanjiang shui* 沿江水).⁶⁷ The territory incorporating the lower and middle course of the Wu River today is Fuling district, Chongqing municipality. Traffic was thriving on the Wu River and by Shu Han times (3rd century CE), it had generated a pool of bellicose local powerful families. After the Han, these groups were pacified

⁶⁶ Hema 1993.

⁶⁷ Timeline 57.

repeatedly, and deported to the Shu plain by tens of thousands.⁶⁸ Present day Fuling city, located where the Wu River feeds into the Yangzi, was the administrative seat of Ji county 枳縣. Ji always had a strategic importance, under the name Yang Pass 陽關, both when traveling eastwards across the gorges from Ba commandery⁶⁹ and when travelling southwards upstream the Wu River, towards the highlands.

Settlements excavated in the vicinity of Fuling are grouped along the Yangzi, and were excavated during the Three Gorges project, including several burials in brick chambers and cliff tombs. The Chadian rock-cut cemetery site for example, is located on the Yangzi River, downstream from the confluence of the Wu River. With only five caves, it has four different cave layouts, but similar carved decoration exists among three of the caves. On both side walls of cave no.1, line carved *dougong* support the roof line. The ceiling is perfectly vaulted, similar to that of a brick tomb. Decoration in the two following caves is similar, but in terms of cave typology, the former is single chambered while the latter have a front room or antechamber. Caves no.2 and no.3 both have a decorated strip on their back wall. The strip is supported by a central, squarish angular *dougong* and two curved *dougong* on both sides. Decoration on the strip is divided in panels, filled in with endless knots and other geometric patterns (**Fig.4.18**). The ceiling of caves no.2 and no.3 is simply vaulted, with no added lining. A drainage trench outlines the floor contour. Cave no.4 has a pyramidal roof ending with a rectangular roof top, and a platform for a coffin, slightly raised above ground, with a drainage channel running around it. Three holes are visible on the door lintel, a larger central one and two side ones, probably for a double gate as found in the Sichuan basin. Cave no.5, a little distance away from the 4 other caves, is very roughly done and eroded too, with a pyramidal ceiling and a square motif as ceiling ornament.

⁶⁸ Timeline 52.

⁶⁹ Timeline 33.



4.18. Line-carved *dougong* in Chadian. Fuling district, Chongqing Municipality. Wall height 170cm.

The seven caves in Beiyan, located on a cliff overlooking the mouth of the Wu River on the Yangzi, are as lofty as the caves in Chadian. The tombs were dated to the mid-Eastern Han, based on the artefacts found therein. In Beiyan for example, a ceramic urn was found with an inscription dated 119 CE.⁷⁰ The caves are equipped with water drainage canals and niches, and three among them have long corridors. While the latter have been re-buried, one cliff tomb without corridor is still visible on the outside, square, with a pyramidal ceiling and a square motif as ceiling top. The door is wide and single layered. Beiyan is not exclusively a rock-cut cemetery, it has also one vertical shaft (M12) tomb dated to the Early Eastern Han, and ten burials in brick chamber attributed to the Late Eastern Han or Shu Han period (3rd cent. CE).⁷¹

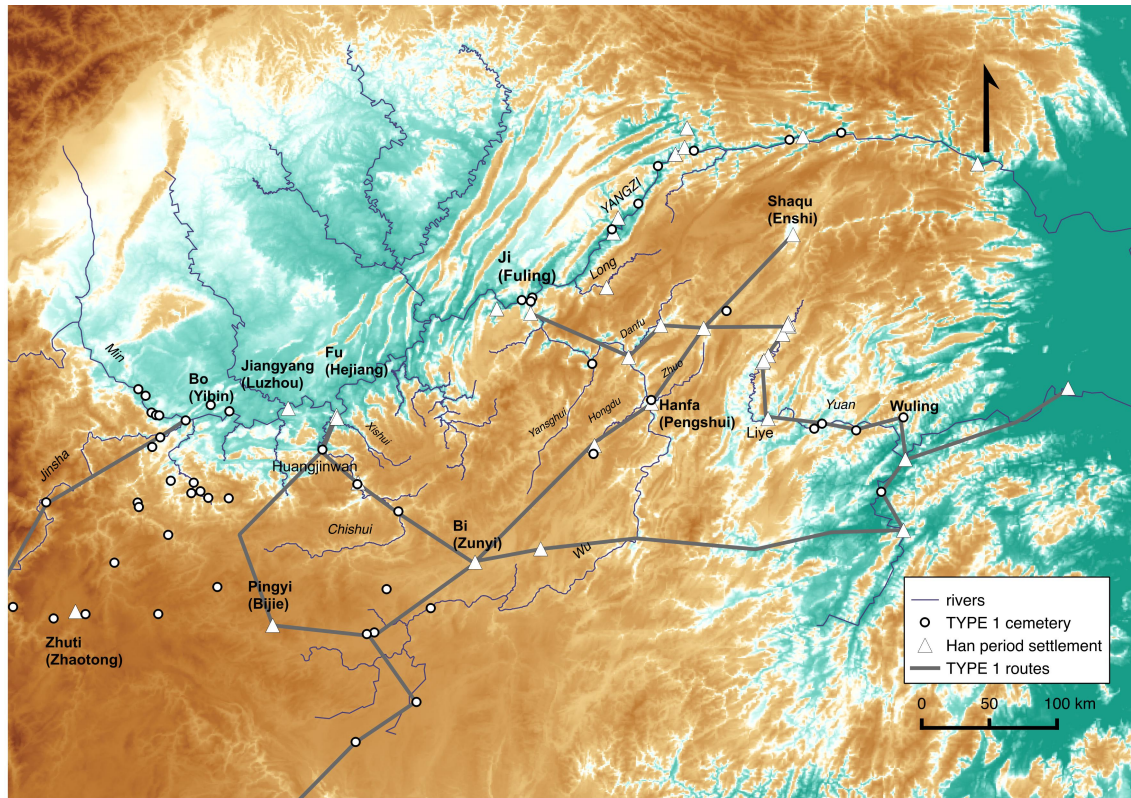
Despite the importance of the Yang Pass, the administrative seat of Han period Fuling commandery was placed upstream the Wu River in ancient Hanfa 漢髮縣 (present-day Pengshui county 彭水縣).⁷² Hanfa was known for its salt wells, its territory neighboured non-Han groups and it had the clear purpose of controlling the Wu River

⁷⁰ Three Gorges 2001(2007):2010-2041. See also Beiyan 2012.

⁷¹ Fuling 2012.

⁷² Eastern Han brick tombs were found in Xiaba, Pengshui County. Lin Bizhong et al. 2006.

area's network of routes.⁷³ The town was a hub serving two different destinations: through the western tributaries of the Wu River one reaches the highland hub of Bi, and through its eastern tributaries one reaches the Yuan River 沅江 system and the Hunan-Hubei plain (**Fig.4.19**).



4.19. Main routes connecting Hanfa to the west (Bi) and to the east (Yuan River). The lines drawn here as « Type 1 routes » are simply connecting cemeteries and settlements : they sometimes follow known steps on fluvial routes, or stretches of land which are known to have been covered from historical sources (such as, for example, Hanfa to Bi partly along the Hongdu tributary and partly on land routes). The resulting graph is largely a work-in-progress integrating several kinds of information.

Two western tributaries connect the Wu River route to the Chishui River route: the Yangshui 洋水 (present-day Furong 芙蓉江) and the Hongdu 洪杜河. Historically, the route connecting the Wu River to Bi might have been used by Chu general Zhuang Qiao as his route to Dian,⁷⁴ and later as a main step to Zangke commandery 牂柯郡.⁷⁵ Archaeological findings along these western tributaries include Han period burials in brick chambers at the mouth of the Hongdu River, in Gongtan district.⁷⁶ Along the Hongdu River course, towards Wuchuan 務川 (Han period Wanning county 萬寧縣),⁷⁷ Han dynasty kilns and settlements were brought to light, and a big quantity of Han

⁷³ Timeline 31.

⁷⁴ Two sources provide contradictory accounts for Zhuang Qiao's itinerary to Dian: Timeline 7 and 8.

⁷⁵ Timeline 56.

⁷⁶ Lin Bizhong et al. 2006.

⁷⁷ Timeline 42.

period burials in assembled stones or brick chambers.⁷⁸ Quarried cinnabar chunks and cinnabar at the state of powder as it is naturally washed by rivers was found in sizeable quantities in the Han tombs, showing the importance of cinnabar extraction trade in the area.⁷⁹

Two eastern tributaries originating in Hubei province connect the Wu River route to the Yuan River route : the Danfu 丹淅 and the Zhuo 濯河 (present-day Apeng jiang 阿蓬江). Both led to ancient Danxing 丹興, now Qianjiang county 黔江縣, a centre known for cinnabar trade.⁸⁰ From Danxing, one would reach the course of the You River, a tributary of the Yuan River. One could follow the course of the You River upstream northwards towards Shaqu (present day Enshi), but that was the least crucial connection.⁸¹ More importantly, the You acted as an essential link between the Wu River system and the Yuan River system, connecting the two through mountain passes.

14 Han period sites are known on the You River course, most of them concentrated in Xiangfeng district 咸豐縣. The most important settlement site found along the You is the ancient town of Liye 裡耶 in Longshan county, Hunan province.⁸² Liye covers 20,000 sq.m., it cumulates four settlements from the Warring States to the Han period. It was fortified with a moat, indicating its military function, had an elaborate drainage system and several cemeteries attached. Preserved in deep wells, 37,000 wooden documents from Qin times, continuous between 222 BCE and 208 BCE, indicate that the route was already in use.⁸³ Liye was indeed a strategic outpost in the Qin conquest of Chu: coming from Shu in the Sichuan basin, the Qin armies followed the Yangzi, Wu, You and Yuan River to ultimately take over the Hunan-Hubei plain.

By following the You River downstream towards the seat of ancient Wuling commandery 武陵郡, one could thus reach the upper Yuan River. From Han times however, the hills west of Wuling were controlled by “barbarians” (*manyi* 蠻夷), so that the Yangzi became the only option to connect Sichuan to the Hunan-Hubei plain,

⁷⁸ Wang Hongguang 2006.

⁷⁹ Tang Wen Yuan 1982A.

⁸⁰ Timeline 32.

⁸¹ He Shiwei 2011:139. The upper course of the Apeng River meets the cave ensembles of Xianfeng county, Hubei province, where cliff burials ensembles are known for earlier and later periods.

⁸² Liye 2007 and 2008.

⁸³ Liu Wei 215:10.

as far as the distribution of known Han period county seats tell.⁸⁴ The people of Wuling, revolted more than ten times in Eastern Han times. The area was still an important tax provider for the government, and the empire did its best to maintain the connection open. De Crespigny considers the Wuling area as an example of successful resistance :

The non-Chinese people of Wuling commandery, and notably those about the region known as (tribes of the) "Five Gorges" (*Wuqi* 五岐) on the upper reaches of the Yuan River by the present-day Hunan-Guizhou border, brought catastrophic defeat to a large locally-recruited Chinese army in 48 AD, and the tribesmen were defeated only after a full campaign by General Ma Yuan.⁸⁵

Nevertheless, indigenous rebellions continue throughout the Later Han, especially in the early 160s,⁸⁶ and well into the Three Kingdoms period, leading to several campaigns against the "Barbarians of the five streams" (*Wuxi man* 五溪蠻) and their sinicized chieftains.⁸⁷ One rock-cut cave located in a loop of the Yuan River in Taoyuan county, is known under the name "stone chamber of Ma Yuan" (*Mayuan shishi* 馬援石室) (**Fig.4.20**). This study has surveyed only a few rock-cut cemeteries in a couple of kilometres radius around the cave, two of them typologically close to Han period cliff tombs (**Fig.4.21**), the others being estimated to date from earlier times (**Fig.4.22**).



4.20. Pseudo-wooden architectural framework in the "stone chamber of Mayuan". Estimated to date from the Han period, more likely dating from the Song period (10th-13th century CE).

⁸⁴ De Crespigny 2004:21.

⁸⁵ De Crespigny 2004:8-9.I. Timeline 29.

⁸⁶ Timeline 41.

⁸⁷ Timeline 53.



4.21. Rock-cut cemetery in Qixingyan. Taoyuan county, Hunan province. Estimated to date from the Han period.



4.22. Rock-cut cemetery in Xiangziyan, Taoyuan county, Hunan province. Estimated to date from the Warring States period.

Having reached the Hunan-Hubei plain, easternmost point of our ecotone, a geological boundary between sandstone and karstic landscapes, and eastern boundary of the network of routes located in the buffer zone that interests us, let us now look at its western boundary: the highlands of Yunnan and Guizhou provinces.

4.3.3. The Jinsha River and the Bo route 焚道

Against the reaches of the Himalaya, runs the Jinsha River 金沙江 in deep-cut impenetrable gorges. The Jinsha is located on the way of Qin and Han penetration towards Yunnan, at 1892m of altitude. The Qin period “Five *chi* wide route” (*Wuchi dao* 五尺道), followed the Jinsha River upstream through today’s Zhaotong county up to Kunming city, Yunnan province. The entrance to the *Wuchi dao*, a territory located at the conjunction of the Min and Jinsha Rivers, was called Bo route (*Bodao* 焚道) in Western Han times.⁸⁸ The word for route (*dao* 道) designated county-level administrative areas with a majority of non-Han population, as opposed to the usual county (*xian* 縣) and commandery (*jun* 郡). The term “Bo” 焚 designated a group of non-Chinese people inhabiting the area,⁸⁹ supposedly a branch of the “Hundred Pu” (*Bai pu* 百濮).⁹⁰ From 135 BCE, Bodao was a county-level administrative unit in Qianwei commandery 犍為郡,⁹¹ with its centre in present-day Yibin city, at the mouth of the Jinsha River. In 86 BCE, Bodao became the centre of the commandery.

Whether Bodao is also to be considered as the location of the Southern barbarians route (*Nanyi dao* 南夷道), opened by Tang Meng on his way to Yelang, is still controversial. Two possible itineraries are proposed for Tang Meng’s campaign (**Fig.4.23**). In the first option, Tang Meng departs from Bodao, follows the course of the Jinsha River and enters Guizhou province from the highland hub of Weixin 威信, along the present day Kunming-Yibin railway.⁹² Although Bodao is the most frequently cited route connecting the Sichuan basin to the highlands, it is unlikely that the deep-cut narrow bed of the Jinsha served as only route to the Yunnan-Guizhou highlands in Han times.⁹³ If he did departed from Bodao, Tang Meng most probably followed a tributary

⁸⁸ Timeline 10.

⁸⁹ Timeline 11.

⁹⁰ Timeline 20. Several papers are devoted to the ethnicity of the Bo 焚 in the proceedings of the first conference on burials in suspended coffins (Xuanguanzang 1981). They are potentially related to the Gelao investigated by Ines de Beauclair 1970, and where the subject of several early articles by Graham in 1935 and 1936A. A recent monograph was devoted to this ethnonym by Liu Fusheng 2000A.

⁹¹ Timeline 22.

⁹² Hervouet 1964:81. Hervouet suggests that successive expeditions towards the south conflated into a single account.

⁹³ “(...) the Jinshajiang is navigable only from Yibin onwards; within Southwest China, it flows in narrow gorges that can be over 1000m deep, making it cumbersome or even impossible to travel. Its tempestuous currents can only be crossed at very few points. This river therefore constitutes a considerable barrier towards the south and west (...)” Hein 2013:39.

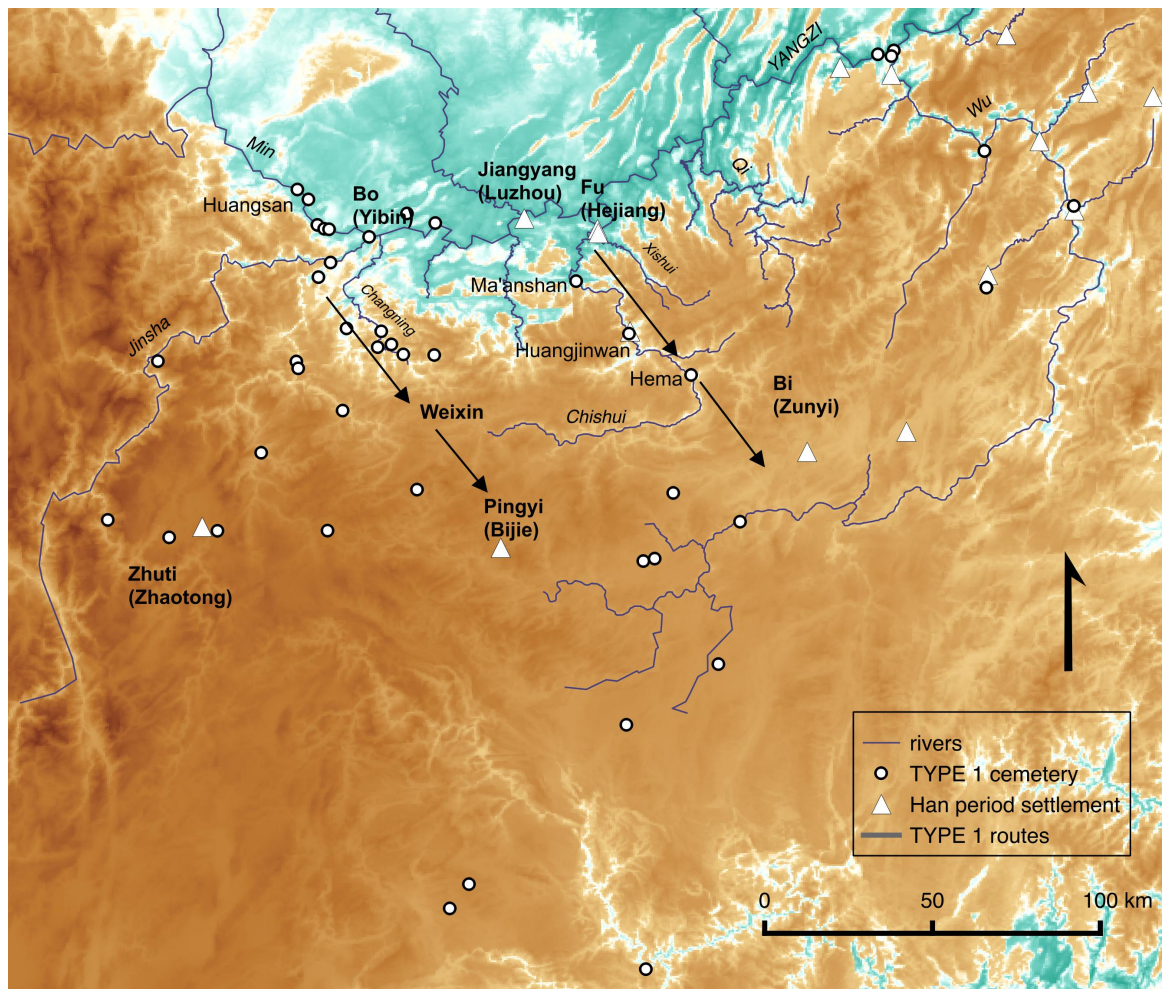
of the Jinsha, such as the Nanguang 南廣河⁹⁴ or Changning 長寧河 rivers. In the second option, the expedition departs from the Fu pass on the Yangzi River and follows the course of the Chishui River upstream to reach the highland hub of Bi. In fact, while Bodao leads to the Himalayan routes, crossing the Yunnan plateau towards eastern India or northern Burma, or to reach the course of the Mekong River, the route to Nanyue did not need to overcome the higher elevations of Yunnan. Tang Meng was probably looking for connections to modern Guangxi province through central and eastern Guizhou province, as his main argument to take over Yelang was the betel trade which connected it to Nanyue, in the southeast. When departing from the Sichuan basin, it would have been an unnecessary waste of energy for him to follow the Jinsha River course.⁹⁵

The reason why the Jinsha route has been much insisted upon, is that this route leads to the Erhai region, and the remains of Dian culture. Seals excavated in the Shijiashan cemetery allowed historians to place the kingdom as a vassal to the Chinese, fostering major attention.⁹⁶ Dian is, to this day, the prime representative of ancient highland cultures. Less visible in the archaeological record, perhaps because less centralized, a federation of smaller entities probably occupied the mountainous stretch of land east of Dian, often referred to as Yelang. These smaller, less identifiable groupings are the ones that interest us here, as they offered greater resilience to Han presence and kept a lower profile in history.

⁹⁴ The Nanguang (ancient Fuhei 符黑水) originates in Weixin. Nanguang county was founded by Han Wudi in 104 BCE, to supervise the good functioning of the *Wuchi dao*. The Nanguan was a major fluvial section of the *Nanyi dao*.

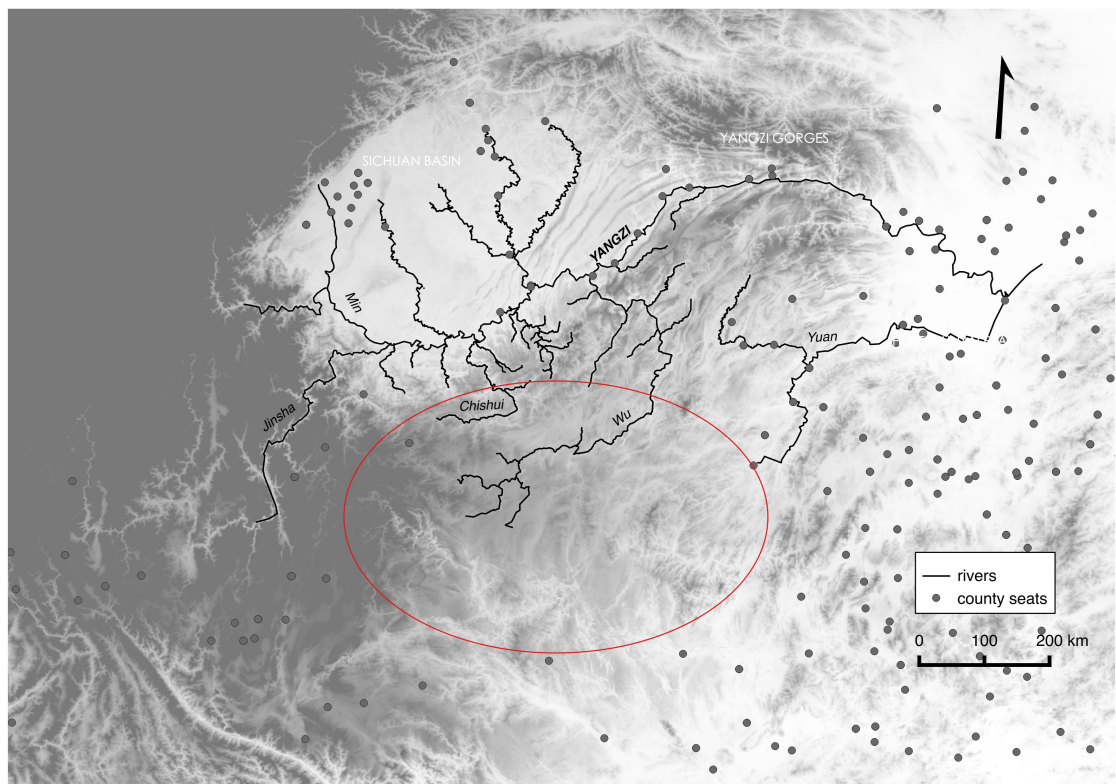
⁹⁵ Zhang Herong 1996:146.

⁹⁶ Timeline 26.

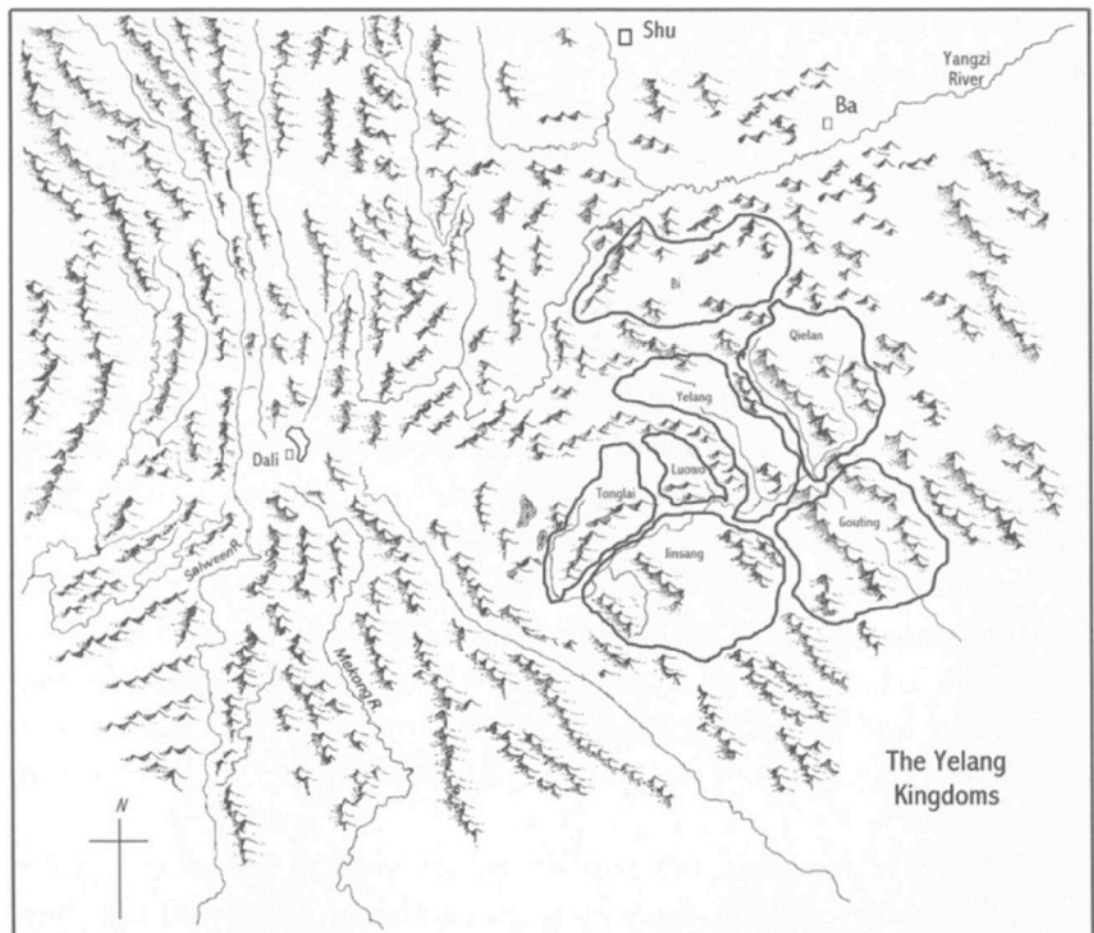


4.23. Two possible itineraries for Tang Meng's campaign : Bodao and the Fu Pass.

The following map shows known county seats for ancient Southwest China: while the Jinsha River course is rather well documented, and county seats are known in the Sichuan basin and the Hunan-Hubei plain, a blank area appears in-between them, circled below in **Fig.4.24**. The placename “Yelang” is often placed in this area (**Fig.4.25**). The last subsection will look at sites located in this blank area, which are sometimes associated with Yelang culture, in search for alternatives to the Jinsha River course. We will see that the Jinsha itself probably did not serve as main axis, but rather its lesser tributaries, which are also those for which a substantial archaeological record is available for the area south of Bodao.



4.24. County seats in Southwest China. Source: CHGIS Time Series. Updated January 2012. In the area circled in red, no county seats are known.



4.25. Hypothetic location for Yelang. Source: Herman 2009:248.

4.3.4. Han tombs in the highlands beyond Bi 譬

Bi, in present day Zunyi county, northern Guizhou province, was a major highland political and trade hub. When Han Wudi destroyed Yelang in 135 BCE to establish Qianwei in its place, Bi became the seat of the commandery. In Eastern Han times, the centre of Qianwei shifted north, and Bi came to belong to Zangke commandery.⁹⁷ We have more information about the area from Jin times (313 CE): it produced tea and honey, counted a thousand households,⁹⁸ and had water route connections to Jiankang 建康 (present day Nanjing), the imperial capital, in the lower Yangzi River basin. No precise location is available for Bi, but it was strategically located between the upper Chishui and upper Wu (Yachi he 鴨池河) river courses.⁹⁹ Several funerary sites datable to the Eastern Han period could match the location of Bi. They are located in Qianxi district, along the Erhai River, a tributary of the upper Wu: Hongxing 紅星, Shuangxing 雙星 and Sanjiao 三角.¹⁰⁰ Most tombs in Hongxing and Shuangxing for example, are in assembled stones, with a few pit graves, and burials in brick chambers furnished with the typical Han assemblage of ceramics, figurines and *wuzhu* coins. Assembled stone tombs are decorated with typical Eastern Han iconography (serpent-tailed figures or *Fuxi* and *Nuwa*, que towered gate, acrobats, human figures).¹⁰¹

From Bi, through Bijie upstream the Chishui River, one could reach Zhuti commandery (*Zhuti jun* 朱提郡) in present day Zhaotong county, Yunnan province. Several Han period sites have been uncovered since the 1970s in northern Guizhou and Yunnan provinces which suggest a transversal connection between Bodao and the Chishui River route. Han tombs of assembled stones were found near Bijie.¹⁰² Further west are the remains of Kele 可樂, believed to be an important centre of the Yelang confederation.¹⁰³ Local tombs, which have no tumulus and are of smaller dimensions, are dated from the late Warring States to the late Western Han period. The first “Han tombs” overlap with the late “local tombs”, and are found until the Early Eastern Han.

⁹⁷ Timeline 7.

⁹⁸ Timeline 55.

⁹⁹ Timeline 30.

¹⁰⁰ Qianxi 2006.

¹⁰¹ Zhang Herong 1996:147.

¹⁰² Qianxi 1987, Qianxi 2006, Jinsha 1998; Tang Wenyan 1982A and 1982B.

¹⁰³ Kele 2008.

Western Han tombs are concentrated in Kele, showing that the location was reached early by Han settlers. 20km west of Kele is the ancient administrative seat of Zhuti commandery. In Han times, the area was known to produce silver and copper.¹⁰⁴ The most representative group of cemeteries for the area is the Zhongshui 中水 site in Weining county 威寧縣.¹⁰⁵ The graves are considered as belonging to a small agglomeration neighbouring Yelang, according to the interpretation of 51 ceramics engraved with patterns parented to Yi script. Eastern Han tombs are of the brick chamber type in Yejihe 野雞河. Considerable numbers of bronze weapons were excavated, which show a strong influence from the Central Plains along with artefacts belonging to local cultures (**Fig.4.26**).

If instead of heading to Zhuti one follows the upper reaches of the Wu River southwards, the next concentration of Han period sites is in Qingzhen 清鎮. Large settlements were also excavated in Ninggu 寧谷, with attached kilns and cemeteries. These count several hundreds of tombs: assembled stones chambers, pit graves and brick-built chambers.¹⁰⁶ In the Southwest, at the foot of the higher Yunnan plateau, are the cemeteries in Xingyi (Jiaole 交樂 site) and Xingren (Wantun 萬屯 site) counties (40 tombs in total), where high status items comparable to the Dian cemetery finds were found. The lavish brick chamber tomb in Jiaole M14 was furnished with a bronze horse and chariot, a money tree, and a seal. In Wantun M12 too, a bronze horse and chariot were unearthed.¹⁰⁷ The seal found in Jiaole belonged to the vice-governor of Ba commandery (*Ba jun shou cheng* 巴郡守丞),¹⁰⁸ pointing at connections to the area around Hejiang (ancient Fu Pass) rather than to the mouth of the Jinsha River (ancient Bodao).¹⁰⁹ In central and western Guizhou, the southernmost limit of Han presence is the Pingba 平壩 site (**Fig.4.27**).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ Timeline 21.

¹⁰⁵ Zhongshui 1981.

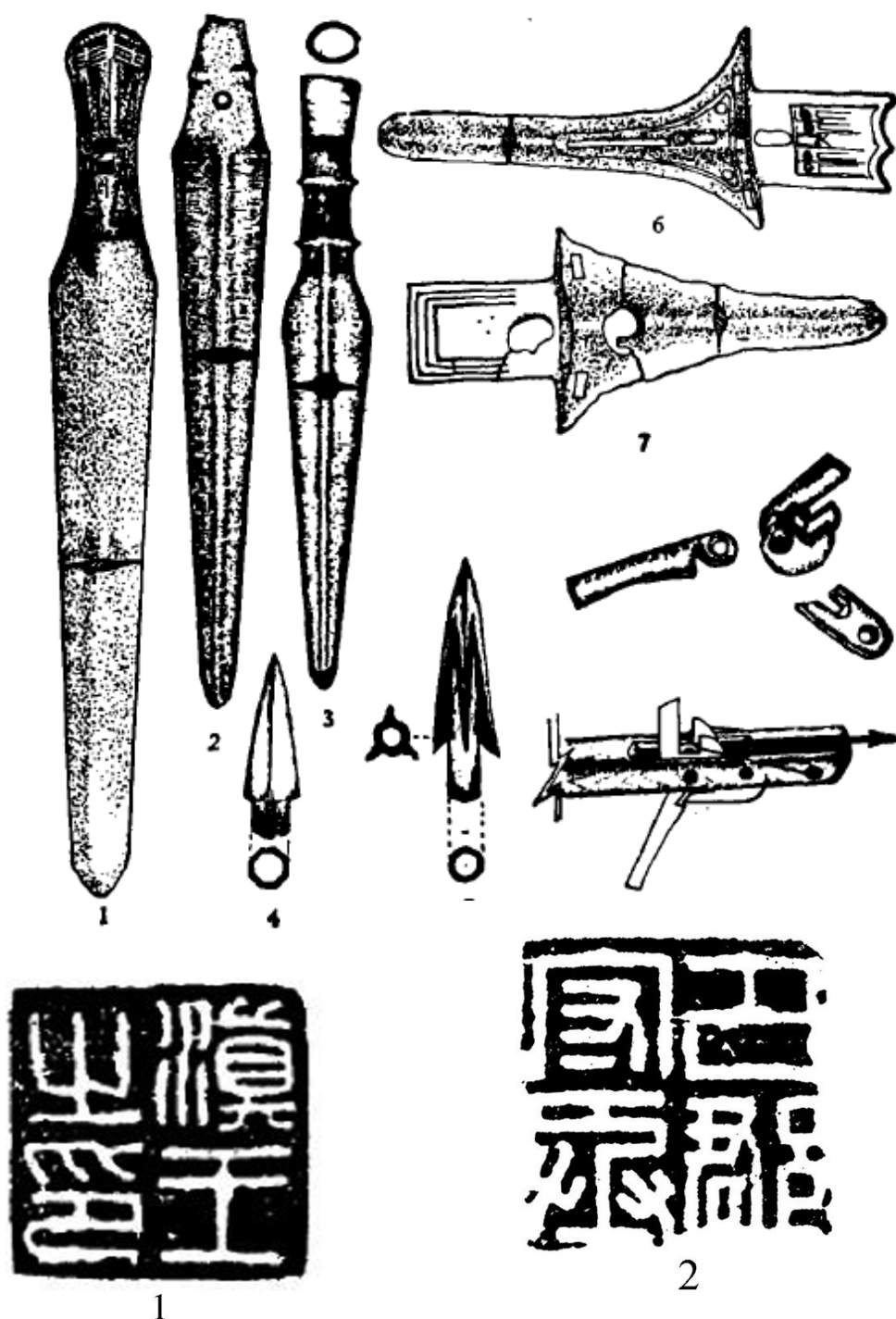
¹⁰⁶ Pingba 1959; Xiong Shuifu 1956; Pingba 1958; Pingba 1961; Pingba 1983; Ninggu 1972; Liu Enzhi 1983; Yan Ping 1983.

¹⁰⁷ Xingyi and Xingren 1979; Zhang Herong 2015.

¹⁰⁸ Jiaole 1993. For the translation of 郡守 as Commandery Governor see entry no.1785 in Hucker 1985:202 and for the translation of 丞 as vice- or assistant see entry no.457 in Hucker 1985:125.

¹⁰⁹ Zhang Herong 1996:149-150.

¹¹⁰ Pingba 1958, 1959, 1961, and 1983.

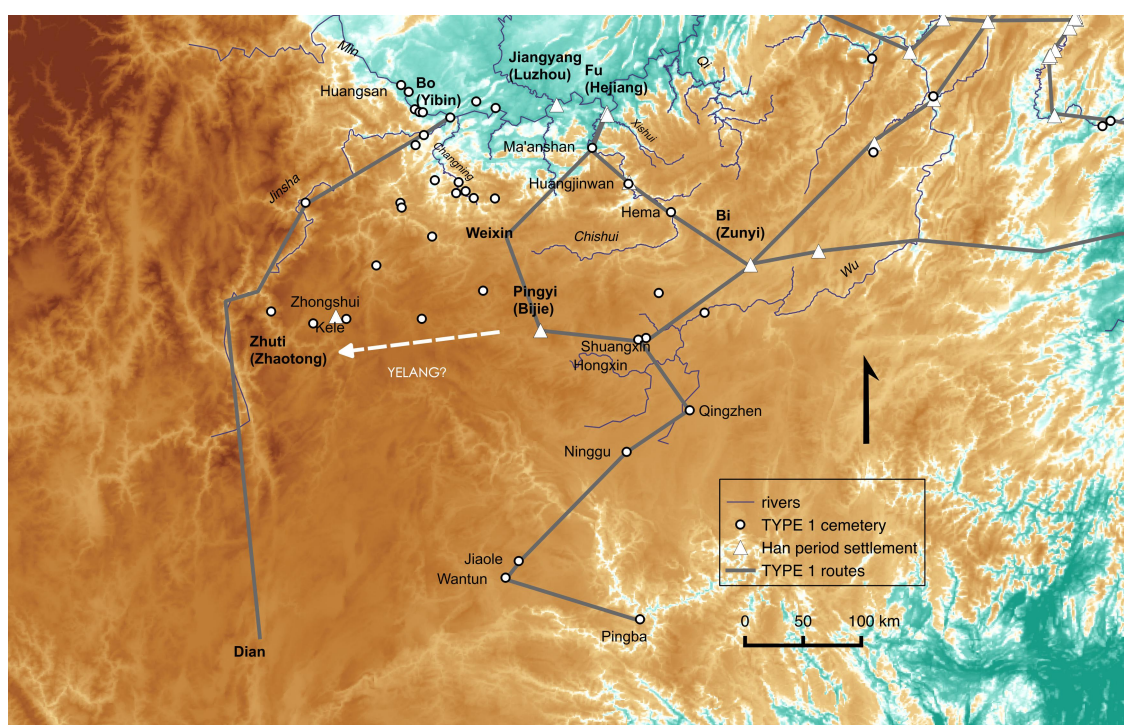


4.26. Local daggers (1-3), arrowheads (4-5) and spearhead (6-7), and Han crossbow mechanism (8) from the Zhongshui cemetery. Weining county, Guizhou province. Source: Zhongshui 1981:228.

4.27. The "seal of the King of Dian (Dian wang zhi yin 滇王之印)" from Shizaishan (1) and the "seal of the vice-governor of Ba commandery (Ba jun shou cheng 巴郡守丞)" from Jiaole (2). Source: Yang Yong 2017.

Zhang Herong noticed that most Han period sites unearthed in Guizhou province, including the cemeteries along the lower Chishui and Xishui rivers reviewed above, are

placed on one north-south circulatory line, let alone from the transversal location of Kele and Zhongshui. He explains differences in material culture (ceramics, bronze vessel and mirrors, seals) in the highland Han tombs by the fact that these belonged to migrants from different routes. Most inhabitants of Kele had come from the Bo route, while the settlers of Bi, Shuangxin, Hongxin, Qingzhen, Jiaole, Wantun and Pingba came through the Chishui River route.¹¹¹ The map below shows the area controlled by Bi, the sites of Kele and Zhongshui on the road to Zhuti, and Han cemeteries further south (Fig.4.28).



4.28. Main concentrations of Han tombs in the highlands. Source: After Wan Jing 2013:160.

4.4. Summary: Major routes south of the Yangzi

As compared to wealthy provincial cultures such as the Min River ensembles of rock-cut antechambers, or decorated coffins from the Luzhou area, Han tombs in the Three Gorges and along major tributaries of the Yangzi such as the Chishui River are of simple craftsmanship. Type 1, i.e. Han tombs south of the Yangzi, can be summarized by three main features: antechambers, quarried or rock-cut coffins and rock-cut stoves.

¹¹¹ The sites connecting Fu to Pingba show similarities in tomb furnishings, such as a similar handled jar 提梁壺 in Qingzhen M2 and Jiaole M6, a similar bronze ewer 銅瓶 in Qingzhen M15 and Jiaole M6.

In terms of distribution, Type 1 cemeteries appear directly related to trade or industrial centres. The settlement pattern in the Three Gorges is constituted by centres on the main course of the Yangzi, salt mines on its upstream tributaries and bigger settlements located at the mouths of tributaries, often with several associated cemeteries in a few kilometres radius. Such configuration was not stable in time and does not systematically head towards progress, for both ecological and cultural reasons, but it provides us with an idea of the relationship between cemeteries and settlements south of the Yangzi. This model should be kept in mind while looking at the distribution of Type 2 cemeteries in areas where no settlement data is available.

A combination of personal survey, archaeological evidence and historical evidence compiled from text-based studies was used here to point at the distorted perception we have of the southward routes beyond the Yangzi. The disproportionate importance of Bodao is balanced by the Chishui River and connections between the Wu and Yuan river courses. To summarise, there is not one single direct route between the Sichuan basin and the highlands but rather, there was a whole network formed by the southern tributaries of the Yangzi. Itineraries in the lower courses of these tributaries were quite flexible up to the upper Wu River loop. They reached intermediary centres such as Zhuti (modern Zhaotong), Pingyi (modern Bijie) and Bi (modern Zunyi) before proceeding further into the highlands

Before and after events of conquest and colonization, independently from imperial politics, trade in the Southwest had been a major motivation behind the maintenance of routes. Just like for the Silk Road, however, explicit mention in written sources of far-reaching southward connections only date back to 122 BCE, with Zhang Qian's report on silk and bamboo items from Shu, traded to India and found in Bactria. His report points at routes connecting Sichuan to South Asia, undisturbed by the ups and downs of imperial governance. After the fall of Qin and the establishment of frontier posts on the limits of Shu, the merchants of Shu were known to "privately"¹¹² use the network of south-western routes. Such private trade will become essential for this study when the activity of the communities dwelling along minor southwards routes, and their motivations for elaborating their own funerary culture will be discussed.

¹¹² Timeline 24.

In Eastern Han times, departing from both the Sichuan and the Hunan plains, extended routes reached into the Yangzi River gorges and penetrated the Guizhou highlands. Control was lost on this network after the Liu Song dynasty (420-479 CE), only to be slowly re-established a millennium later under the Song trade enterprises. Ming frontier policies, the improved navigability of waterways under Qing and the latter's proactive colonial enterprise achieved the integration of this network.

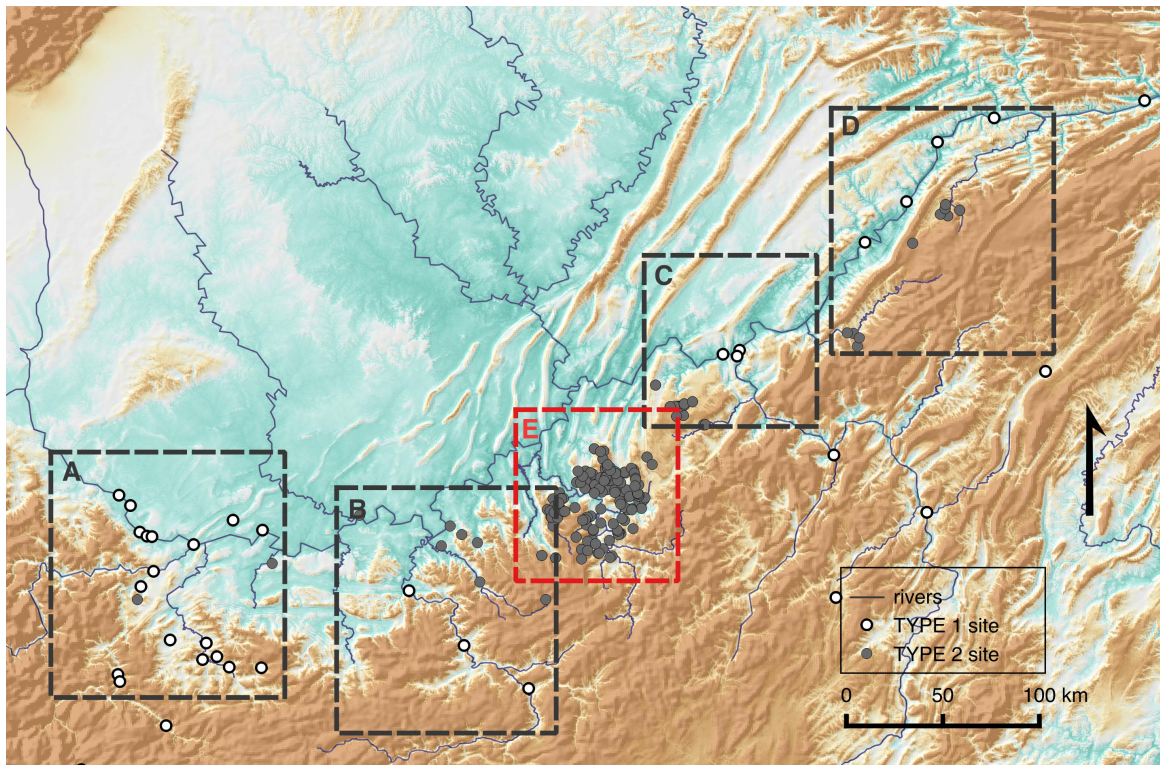
In times where connections between the plain and highlands remain invisible in historical records over considerable time spans, the evidence provided by densely distributed rock-cut cemeteries south of the Yangzi gains in relevance. Highland routes, despite their importance in connecting lowland centres, remain comparatively unknown. The harsher environment and segmental nature of paths in mountainous areas suggest "alternative logics of mobility",¹¹³ which are investigated in the next chapter.

¹¹³ Frachetti et al. 2017:197.

5. Distribution of Type 2 caves on minor tributaries of the Yangzi

The previous chapter investigated the distribution of Type 1 burial caves among Han tombs along four major southward routes connecting the Sichuan basin to the Yunnan-Guizhou highlands, and to a lesser extent, to the Hunan-Hubei plain. The chapter concluded that Type 1 routes, settlements and cemeteries are found along the four major southern tributaries of the upper Yangzi River: the Jinsha, Chishui, Wu and Yuan rivers. This chapter goes one step further in mapping the distribution of typologically distinct burial caves along secondary tributaries of the Yangzi. Strikingly, rather than the highland cemeteries reviewed in the previous chapter, it is the buffer zone between plain and highlands that shows stronger typological contrast with Han tombs. This calls to mind Barth's theory reviewed in Chapter 2, stating that identities are triggered by the proximity of the "other" and by increased inter-group contact. While the funerary expressions of cultures such as Dian show gradual typological homogeneity under Han rule, new types, coined "Type 2" cliff tombs in this study, appear in culturally mixed areas.

This first half of this chapter functions as a series of case studies, uncovering Type 2 cemeteries alongside valleys of the Type 1 route network identified in the previous chapter. The following map shows the comparisons made between the distribution of Type 1 (white dots) and Type 2 (grey dots) for four areas: along the Bo route (A), along the Chishui river route (B), along the Wu river route (C), and along the main course of the Yangzi (D) (**Fig.5.1**).



5.1. Type 1/Type 2 Case study comparisons along each major southern tributary of the Yangzi River. Dotted boxes indicate rough catching areas, but the discussion includes sites that lie outside the square. The central box “E” in red marks the emplacement of the Qi river valley.

The second half of the chapter introduces the case study led in Chapter 6 on the Qi River 綦江, a yet overlooked southern tributary of the Yangzi located between the Chishui and the Wu rivers. Outlined in the map above by a box with no attached letter, the Qi River area exclusively displays Type 2 cemeteries, and will be the focus of the next chapter.

An appendix to Chapters 2, 4 and 5 entitled “11.1.Timeline” provides the detail of historical events, names and place names mentioned in the text (hereafter: Timeline + entry number).

5.1. Major rivers, minor tributaries and land routes

As seen in the previous chapter, three among the southern tributaries of the Yangzi stand out of the network as forming a north-south axis: the Jinsha, Chishui and Wu rivers. The Yuan River completes the picture as a major east-west axis, although rock-

cut cemeteries on its course remain largely undated and unsurveyed.¹ All four tributaries originate in the Yunnan-Guizhou plateau and feed the Yangzi River (**Fig.5.2**).

River	Length (km)	Source	Mouth
Jinsha 金沙江	2,290	Qinghai	Yangzi and Min rivers at Yibin, Sichuan
Chishui 赤水河	523	Yunnan	Yangzi at Hejiang, Sichuan
Wu 烏江	1,150	Yunnan	Yangzi at Fuling, Chongqing
Yuan 沅江	864	Guizhou	Dongting lake at Changde, Hunan

5.2. Major southern tributaries of the Yangzi River.

We have seen that the Chishui River is navigable along most of its course. However, as noted in the previous chapter, not all major rivers are ideal for transportation. The seasonal flooding of rivers, predominantly rain-fed, and their rapid flow are obstacles for navigation.² Dramatic drops, rugged riverbeds³ and the narrow canyon-like gorges,⁴ are also factors which limit navigability. The Jinsha for example, which forms the upper course of the Yangzi, flows along the eastern rim of the Himalayan massif. Its elevation climbs to 1,000m and its natural drop is 667m, preventing it from being a convenient water route.⁵ Powerful rivers can act as barriers in their upper courses, and their smaller tributaries be a better option for transportation. The Wu River for example, originates between Guizhou and Yunnan, flows across Guizhou and Sichuan, and functions as a border between the two modern provinces. It feeds into the Yangzi in the gorges area and its elevation only drops around Pengshui county, where Hanfa, the Han period commandery seat, used to be located. The location of administrative centres is set as far as possible in the hinterland. The same reasoning is valid for the Yuan River, which originates in Guizhou and flows to the Dongting lake. It is mainly navigable up to Taoyuan county, where most known Han dynasty sites are located. Therefore, major and minor water routes as well as land routes must combine to form the network.

¹ Preliminary survey was led for this study for the Yuan River sites in Taoyuan county, Hunan province, introduced in Chapter 4. Partial data is available in Taoyuan 2011.

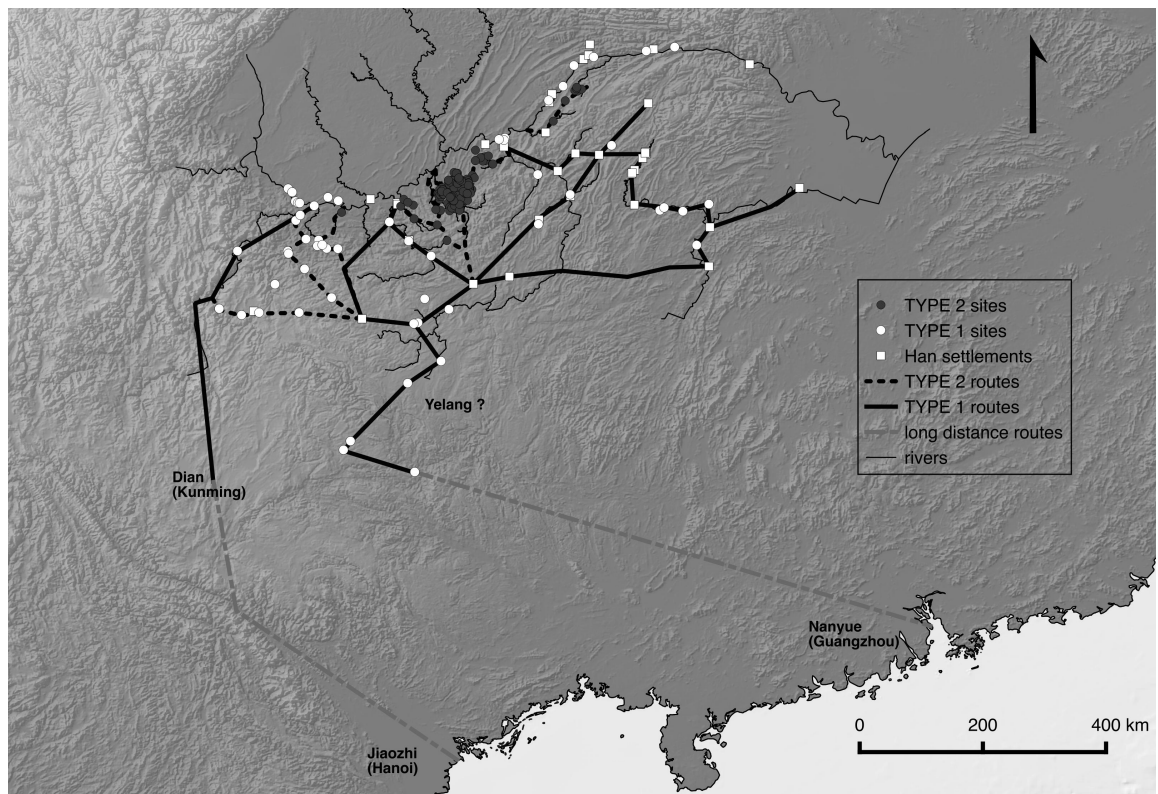
² Hein 2013:45 uses modern hydropower data to show that the upper course of rivers such as the Jinsha functioned as barriers rather than connections.

³ The present day navigability of rivers does not mirror their navigability in Han times, a first reason being the progress in waterlocking and navigation in premodern China, a second one being the terraforming activities in modern China. According to the Britannica Encyclopedia, for the Wu River, "until the mid-20th century the river system was of little use for reducing the region's isolation, as submerged rocks and rapids prevented navigation for all but a few short stretches. Since the 1950s, however, blasting and dredging have opened more than 480km of the Wu River and its upstream sections to motorized boats." (<http://www.britannica.com/place/Wu-River-system> last accessed 29/01/2016).

⁴ Hein 2013:49 notes that such a landscape is due to higher river levels and sediment volume during the last interglacial period, which warm temperature brought more rain and increased the vegetation coverage.

⁵ Guo Jinghui et al.1985:74-79. Cited in Hein 2013:44.

Departing from centres on the Yangzi River, the network follows a tree-like structure, with as many branches as there are tributaries south of the Yangzi, headed towards highlands hubs such as Bi. Once on the highlands, major trunks went across Dian, to reach the Mekong river system until present day Vietnam (Jiaozhi 交趾), or across the presumed territory of Yelang, to reach the Pearl river system until present day Guangdong province (ancient *Nanyue* 南越). Connections between the highland polities of Dian, possibly Yelang and the Hunan-Hubei plain were made possible by transversal routes between these two trunks. My field survey focused on the area delimited by the Chishui and Wu rivers, known under the Tang as the Anle shui 安樂水 and the Yanjiang 沿江 routes. These two routes supported myriad smaller paths, which formed the capillary network where most Type 2 sites reviewed in this chapter are located. In the area caught between these two routes, along the course of the Qi River, reported finds are exclusively of Type 2 caves (**Fig.5.3**).

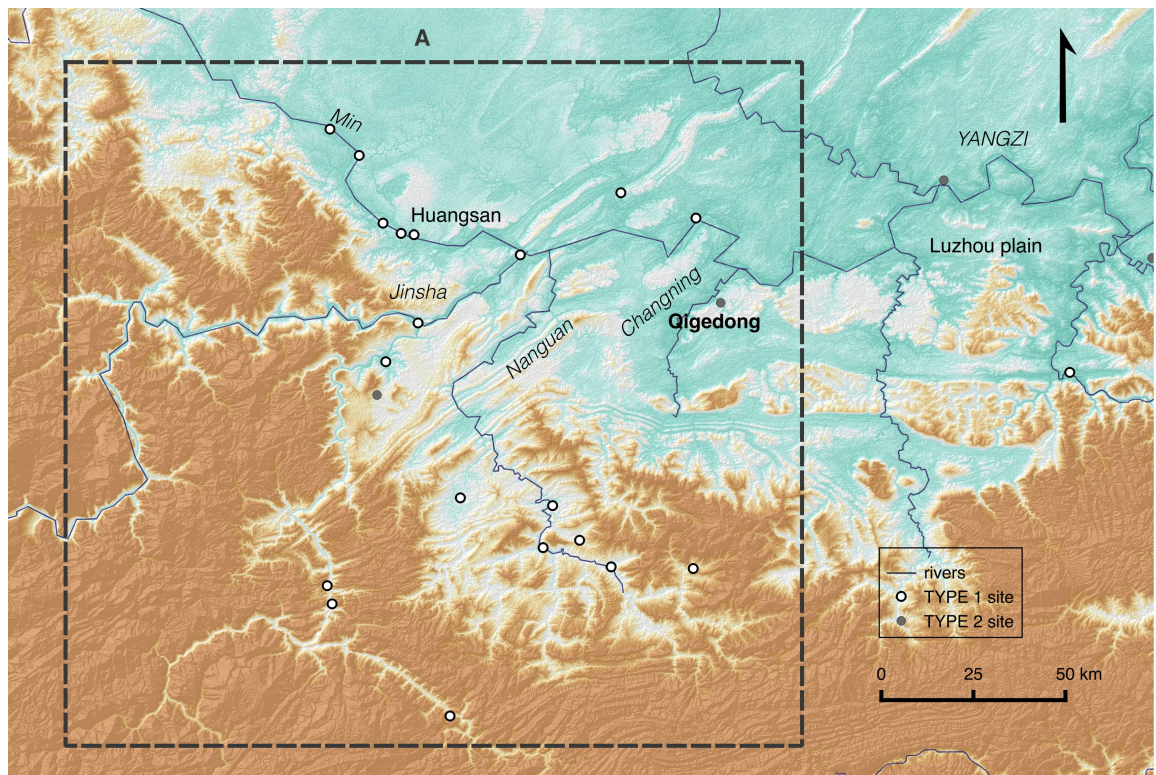


5.3. Local, interregional and long-distance routes.

5.2. Distribution of Type 2 sites along side valleys of the Type 1 network

5.2.1. Side valley of the Jinsha: Type 2 caves on the Changning River

This section focuses on the Qigedong site along the Changning River 長寧河,⁶ in southwestern Sichuan province. 144 Eastern Han cemeteries with a total of 560 rock-cut burial caves, at an average height from ground of 10.6m, are known in Yibin municipality.⁷ A third of these sites, however, is located on the Min River (51 sites) and about 12 on the Yangzi main course. All other sites are located on eastern tributaries of the Jinsha River leading to Bijie,⁸ at the exception of four rock-cut cemeteries located directly on the Jinsha River. By contrast to the small number of sites found on the Jinsha River, which would at first appear as a major route towards the Yunnan plateau, ten times as many cemeteries are located on the Changning River. Among these, 16 rock-cut cemeteries are known only on the upper course of the Nanguang River 南關河, probably as a continuation of the Changning River route towards Yunnan (**Fig.5.4**).



⁶ Changning county was under partial or indirect Han rule at least until the 11th century. Yujing xian 涪井縣 was established in 1075 as a *jimi zhou*. In *Changning xian zhi* 長寧縣誌 (1686, 1808). From Byong, entry no. S-E05H.

⁷ Atlas Sichuan 2009 (Vol.3):709-786. Refer to General Appendix (site_ID : S-Y-xxx). The tombs in Hengshan have been attributed to the Tang period, and labeled as being the fact of ethnic minorities' cliff tombs (民族崖墓). See Catalogue 11.6.8.1.

⁸ Atlas Yunnan 2002:81-86 and Zhaotong 2012:115-202. Refer to General Appendix (site_ID : Y-Z-xxx).

5.4. A: Type 1 and Type 2 sites along the Min, Jinsha and Nanguan rivers. Location of Qigedong on the Changning River.

Due to its location in a mountainous enclave of the Luzhou plain, on a second order tributary of the Yangzi, Qigedong is exposed to the influences of both the Min River complex caves such as Huangsan (60km west), and the Luzhou plain decorated stone coffins (45km east) (**Fig.5.5**).



5.5. Qigedong site location. Source: 28°40'11.00"N and 105° 1'13.03"E. Google Earth. 2017. last date of access February 5, 2018.

The antechambers along the Min River and the stone coffins in Luzhou seen in the previous chapter are considered as representative examples of Eastern Han rock-cut burials in Southern Sichuan. When it comes to Qigedong, one encounters a radically different version of a cemetery, a funerary space and carvings in Eastern Han times. Although the first report on the site was published in 1985,⁹ Qigedong has been presented as a one of a kind site. In this chapter, it acts as the westernmost example of Type 2 sites.

The accumulation of caves, depictions and inscriptions on its palimpsest-like cliff face were attributed to Eastern Han times according to the epigraphic evidence (from 122 to 178 CE). The inscriptions are in Chinese script and refer to Han dynastic era names,

⁹ Qigedong 1985.

and carved depictions evoke themes often encountered in Han carvings.¹⁰ However, their style and distribution point at an hybrid artistic tradition which I will analyze in Chapter 8. The site counts a group of seven caves plus a last unidentified cave located apart from the main cliff.¹¹ On the main cliff, four dated inscriptions show that interventions succeeded each other, within one month, seven months, or 56 years. Two among the inscriptions refer to the previous dynastic era.¹² The first error is only of a little less than two months, given that the Xiping era finishes on the 2nd month of the 6th year. The second error shows an eight months delay. These might indicate obstacles in communication.

熹平七年四月口

In the 7th year of the Xiping era, on the 4th month, (...)

熹平七年十月二日易子口口口

In the 7th year of the Xiping era, on the 2nd day of the 10th month, (...)

The caves in Qigedong have no monumental antechamber but they are highly visible. This spectacular aspect (**See Fig.1.2**) is enhanced by a surprise effect, as their visibility is strictly delimited by the meanders of the deep-cut canyon. No quarried coffins are found in Qigedong, but four among the seven caves feature rock-cut coffins (cave no.2, 4, 6 and 7). These are extremely rare in Type 2 caves south of the Yangzi, and confer to the site an intermediary status, halfway between the plain and highlands traditions, which motivated this study to look for more examples of this kind. The rich, ostentatious ornamentation of the cliff face sets Qigedong apart from the plain Type 1 caves found in the Three Gorges area or along main southern tributaries of the Yangzi. Such typological differences in terms of cemetery setting and cave shape are consistent with the Type 2 caves investigated below.

5.2.2. Side valley of the Chishui: Type 2 caves on the Xishui River

Near to its confluence with the Yangzi, the Chishui receives the waters of the Xishui River 習水河, formerly called Xibu shui 鰲部水.¹³ Written sources present the Xibu as another option from the Fu Pass to reach the highlands.¹⁴ While the Chishui River runs down from the Guizhou plateau, its downstream section flowing into the Luzhou plain,

¹⁰ Ding Tianyi 1993.

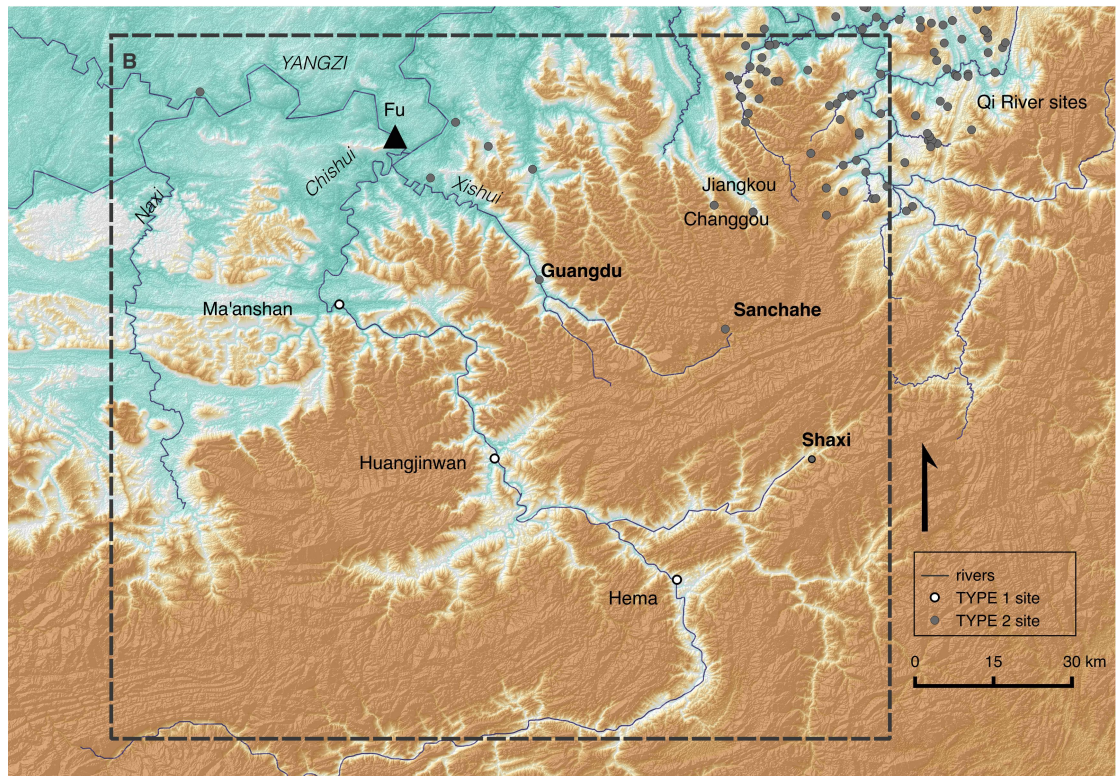
¹¹ A dozen more damaged caves are placed at more than 50m from the main cliff, still to be investigated. Sichuan University 1985:51.

¹² Refer to Table A26 and 28 in Appendix to Chapter 7: Inscriptions Table.

¹³ Yan Gengwang 1986:1219.

¹⁴ Timeline 59.

the Xishui River instead flows in an enclosed territory. With its narrower valleys, the Xishui gives us the opportunity to distinguish between sites along first and second order tributaries of the Yangzi. Just like along the Chishui River surveyed in the previous chapter, Han period cemeteries were found roughly every 30-40km along the Xishui (**Fig.5.6**).



5.6. B: The Chishui River sites and the Xishui route. Note the 30km interval between the sites of Guanduyan-Sanchahe-Shaxi, parallel to Ma'anshan-Huangjinwan-Hema, typical of stages on a route.

The first Type 2 site encountered on the Xishui riverbank when traveling upstream from Fu, is Guanduyan. Two caves are placed 7m high above ground, with 1 sq.m. doors possessing one and two recessed layers. The caves are wide 1.8m for a 1m depth (**Fig.5.7**). At about 10m downstream from the two caves is a panel of line-carved figures, hardly decipherable (**Fig.5.8**).¹⁵

¹⁵ Part of the carvings have been added after the 80s, and the authenticity of the whole panel has been discussed. The earliest photographic recording I was able to find of these is a rubbing is from the 80s. Tianjin 1998.



5.7. Double recessed door in Guanduyan. Xishui county, Guizhou province.



5.8. Line carved panel in Guanduyan. Xishui county, Guizhou province. 129cm x 34cm. Source: Tianjin 1998:56.

The next Type 2 site upstream the Xishui is Sanchahe. The site is located on the Sancha River, at about 1,5km from the junction of the Sancha with two other streams in one point, all three forming the upper Xishui River. He Shiwei considers the site as important evidence for the path between Fu and Bi, a fact that supports my own interpretation of the material.¹⁶ Further upstream the Sancha River, one climbs into the Simian mountain range 四面山, towering at 1,700m of altitude. The elevation of Sanchahe reaches 930m, just at the foot of the massif. To get to the Qi River basin further east, one would follow the Xishui River downstream, flowing at the foot of the Simian mountain massif, through the sites of Jiangkou and Changgou (dated 159 CE and 165 CE). This way, the site would not only have functioned as an important step

¹⁶ He Shiwei 2011:132.

between Fu and Bi, but also for travelers going to or coming from the Qi River area. The caves are placed at mid-height on the hill slope, just on the limit of modern fields. It is difficult to climb any higher since the slope increases immediately after the carved cliff (**Fig.5.9**).



5.9. View of Sanchahe. Xishui county, Guizhou province. 215-223 CE.

The five caves are distributed in two groups on the hill face. In the first group of two caves, the first one was left unfinished and the second one is 2.3m wide for 2.2m deep. It features layered doorframes and a 223 CE inscription recording a transaction.¹⁷ Just like the Qigedong inscriptions mentioned above, the Sanchahe inscription contains an instance of erroneous dating. In this case, the delay is of three months, the Zhangwu era lasting only until the 4th lunar month. Apparently, the information on the death of Liu Bei 劉備 (223 CE) in Baidicheng did not reach the area, meaning that connections between Sanchahe and the Yangzi gorges were slow.

章武三年七月十日

In the 3rd year of the Zhangwu era, on the 10th day of the 7th month
In the second group, 20m further on the same hill face, one cave of smaller dimensions has its inner space as wide as the door. The next two caves are small and niche-shaped with horizontal rectangular openings. They are only about 60cm wide for 35cm deep, thus too small to store a fully extended body in. One of the niche-like caves is surrounded by line carvings of a tower, a boat, a bird and a fish (**Fig.5.10** and see Fig.8.10). The other niche-like cave has a patterned ceiling, and a low relief fish figure

¹⁷ Refer to Table A46 in Appendix to Chapter 7: Inscriptions Table. The transaction is discussed in Chapter 7.

on its inner wall, but close to the opening, visible from the foot of the cliff (**Fig.5.11**). As it will be expanded upon in the next chapter, niche-like caves are an important characteristic of Type 2 sites.



5.10. Line-carved outdoor cliff face around Sanchahe M5. Xishui county, Guizhou province. 215-223 CE.



5.11. Indoor carving visible from the foot of the cliff in Sanchahe M4. Xishui county, Guizhou province. 215-223 CE.

Halfway between Fu and Bi, on the east bank of the Shaxi River 沙溪河, another tributary of the Chishui River, is the Shaxi site. This is the southernmost cave group included in this study.¹⁸ The site is located at about 50-100m above the ground, it has

¹⁸ Shaxi was discovered in 2001. One more site was recently discovered which holds depictions comparable to Sanchahe. Private communication Chen Cong, Xishui county archaeological office.

68 caves, high placed on a steep cliff face, visible from across the valley (**Fig.5.12**). The doors are about 128cm high for 120cm wide, and some of them have four added recessed layers, protected by carved gutterlines above their lintels. Undeciphered inscriptions are located next to the cave doors. Most caves are single chambers, with 25 to 35cm thick doorframes. The biggest chamber is 2.35m wide for 3m deep and 2m high. The ceiling shapes are flat or vaulted. The importance of Shaxi is obvious from the size of its cemetery, which can be matched only by a few examples south of the Yangzi. The position of Shaxi, halfway between Fu and Bi, is comparable to that of Huangjinwan, but it was most probably reached by land route from Sanchahe or provided a transversal connection to the Qi River valley.

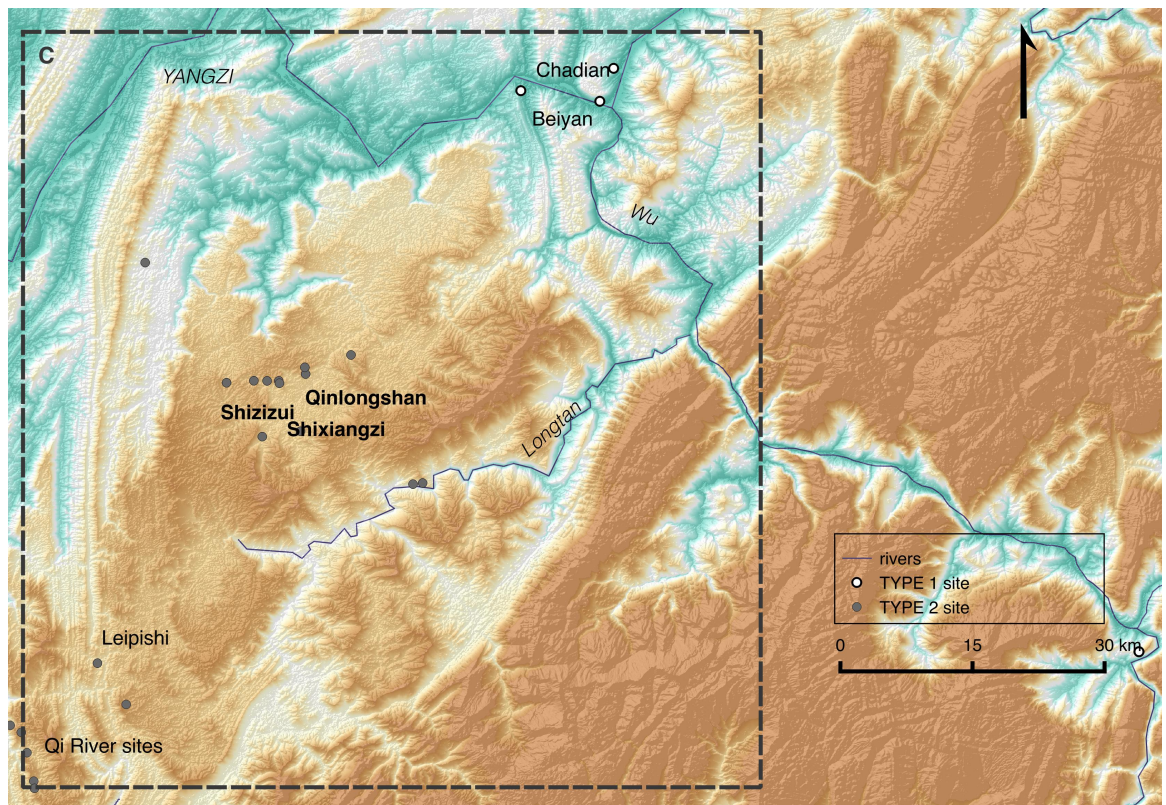


5.12. View of Shaxi. Guangdian district, Xishui County. Source: courtesy of Xishui county archaeological office.

As compared to Type 1 sites found along the Chishui River, the caves in Guanduyan, Sanchahe and Shaxi are high placed on cliffs and visible, with no trench, corridor or apparent sealing device. They are generally of smaller size, often with no attempt to design them as chambers and no rock-cut furnishings, sometimes even reduced to mere niches. By contrast, some of the doors have multiple recessions added. Outdoor carvings and inscriptions are added to the caves, while some indoor carvings are visible from the outside.

5.2.3. Side valley of the lower Wu : Type 2 caves on the Longtan River

Han period remains along the Yangzi main course around present-day Fuling city, were introduced in the previous chapter. In contrast, the lower course of the Wu River itself has yielded little findings. Only one brick tomb was found at 350m of elevation, in Shanwoxiang 山窩鄉. This subsection reports my survey on a cluster of rock-cut cemeteries located in a mountainous enclave upstream on the Longtan River, a western tributary of the Wu River, thus a second order tributary of the Yangzi (Fig.5.13).



5.13. C: Type 1 sites in Fuling district, Chongqing municipality. Type 2 sites along the Longtan tributary, and their connection to Leipishi and the Qi River sites, further West, in Nanchuan and Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality.

According to archaeologist Huang Hai, Han period sites on the Yangzi are earlier than inland sites upstream on the Wu River.¹⁹ He argues that the typological difference found between inland cliff burials and those located on the Yangzi is due to a difference in terrain. Huang Hai also suggests that the caves inland are smaller because of weaker technical means and lesser resources in late Eastern Han times. In his interpretation, the mountainous area upstream the Longtan River was not inhabited

¹⁹ Huang Hai, director of the Fuling district archaeological office and author of the report on lower Wu River sites (Beiyuan 2012). private communication July 2015.

before the Han, civilisation having reached the highlands from the plain, the former being inhabited later and remaining backwards. His arguments contrast my own findings: to him, the hinterland caves are isolated examples, while my survey managed to match them with similar examples across several modern districts and provinces. Ten cemeteries in Longtan district are clustered in a 10 sq.km. mountainous area 10km northwest of the Longtan River course, with a total of 66 uncovered caves. This type of density is close to what we will encounter in the Qi river valley. Although it belongs to mountainous Nanchuan district (culminating at 2238m), the Leipishi site, known for its 133 CE inscription, is less than 10km away from the cluster of sites in Longtan district. Three surveyed Type 2 cemeteries along the Longtan River are reviewed below: the Shizizui, Shixiangzi and Qinlongshan sites.

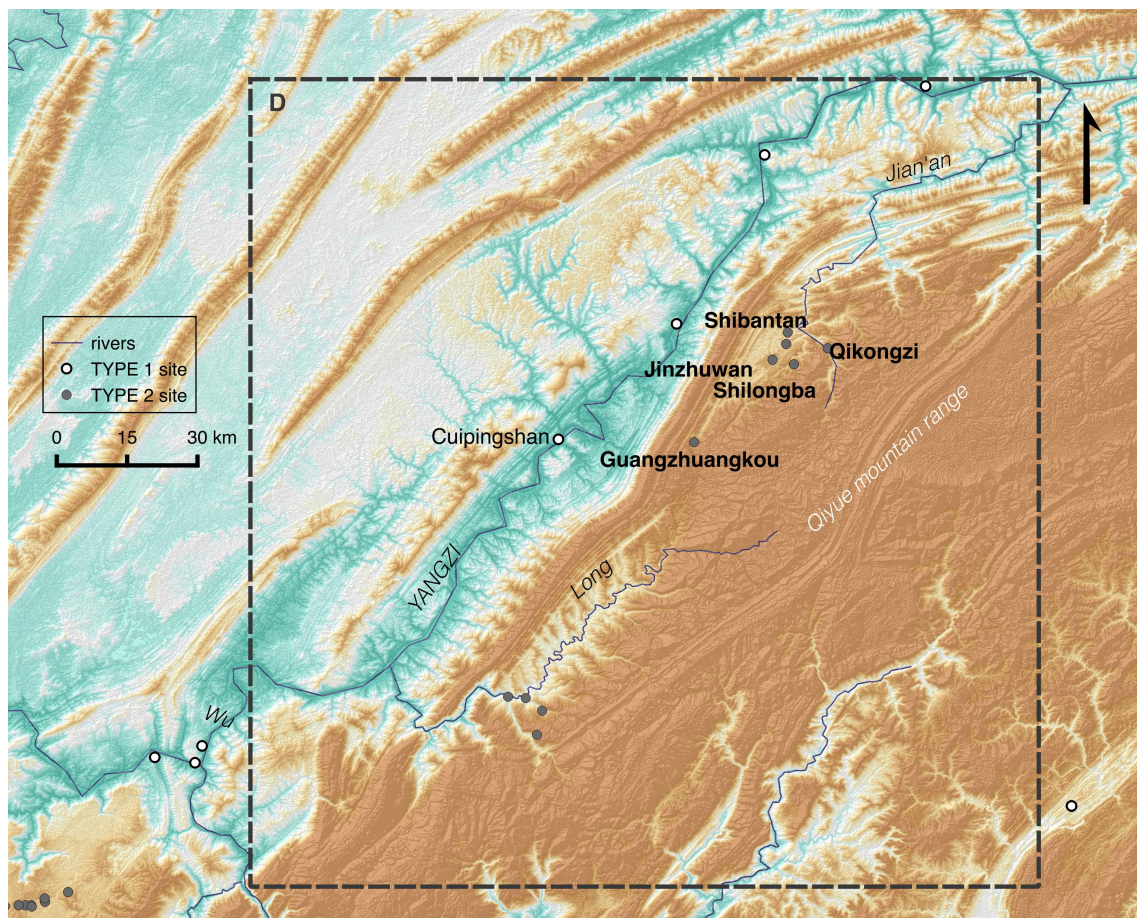
Shizizui, with 21 caves, is the biggest known site in Longtan district. Two types of caves are found in Shizizui: small chambers with eroded ceilings, and wider chambers with pyramidal ceilings. The sandstone cliff is very soft and one of the caves was abandoned half-carved when the masons met boulders of harder sandstone embedded in the cliff body. The angle behind the entrance bear traces of the triangular stage in the cutting sequence identified for the Qi River caves in Chapter 6. The entrances are generally of larger dimensions and higher than wide, as compared to the usual squarish, small Type 2 cave opening. Moreover, several doorframes have traces of sealing devices on both sides. However, Shizizui features one carefully finished tunnel-like cave, frequently encountered in Type 2 cemeteries.

The Shixiangzi and Qinlongshan sites belong to a tight cluster of eight sites, northwest of Longtan district. In Shixiangzi the stone is harder, with a darker color. The carving has a better finish than in Shizizui. The cliff is not straight, so cave builders had to get rid of a thick tetrahedron of sandstone above the cave openings. Two unfinished caves in Shixiangzi feature finished two-layered doors, as the carvers encountered a natural fault in the sandstone. Line-carved, simply sketched birds are found on the back wall of a couple of caves. The site of Qinlongshan is close by Shixiangzi, but harder to access. It is carved in the same eroded, whitish sandy stone. The outlines of pyramidal ceilings are still barely perceptible.

East of the Wu River, more clusters of Type 2 sites have been surveyed by this study, for which a report is provided in the next subsection. The Wu River course itself actually “interrupts” the distribution of Type 2 cemeteries south of the Yangzi. Just like the Luzhou plain, which surrounded the mountainous enclave of Qigedong and extended its influence on Fu and the lower Chishui River, the alluvial plain of the lower Wu River was probably a preferred land for settlers coming from the main course of the Yangzi.

5.2.4. Side valleys of the Yangzi main course: Type 2 caves on the upper Long and Jiannan rivers.

The Long River runs parallel to the Yangzi but in the opposite, east-west direction. It has a characteristic canyon-and-plateau conformation constituted of higher terraces and lower alluvial plains (*ping* and *ba*) (**Fig.5.14**). Along the Long River, only 10th century CE or later caves have been reported until now.²⁰



5.14. D: Cuipingshan on the Yangzi main course in Zhongxian district, Chongqing municipality. Long River sites and Guanzhuangkou in Fengdu and Shizhu districts, Chongqing municipality. Jian'an River sites and Qikongzi in Lichuan county, Hubei province, easternmost edge of the study area.

²⁰ Wang Yu 2004.

It is on a tributary of the upper Long River, thus a second order tributary of the Yangzi, that this study was able to locate two Type 2 sites dated to the 2nd-3rd centuries CE : Guanzhuangkou and Dongsanzhai. A mountain range separates known Type 1 cemeteries located on the main course of the Yangzi, such as Cuipingshan,²¹ and the Type 2 cemetery of Guanzhuangkou.

In Guanzhuangkou, high up a sandstone cliff overlooking the stream, five caves are known among which three are of the tunnel type, one of the chamber type and one of the niche type (**Fig.5.15 and 16**).



5.15. Guanzhuangkou overlooking a minor stream of the upper Long River course in Shizhu autonomous prefecture, Chongqing municipality.



5.16. Mixed typology in Guanzhuangkou. Shizhu autonomous prefecture, Chongqing municipality.

²¹ Cuipingshan 2011.

Two inscriptions which have been overlooked to this day are still visible on the cliff face, along with line-carved tower and a tiger. They can be dated to 172-178 CE and 184 CE, thus corresponding tightly to the time frame of our Qi River caves. The walls of the tunnel-like caves are dressed in tight geometric patterns with elaborate line-carved towers, fish and coins. Further inland lies the site of Dongsanzhai, which has identical line-carved *que* towers, fishes and one inscription (Refer to Fig.8.27).

While looking for the eastern limit of the distribution of Type 2 cemeteries, this study pushed the survey beyond the Qiyue mountain range 七岳山, in present day Hubei province. A pass across the Qiyue mountains (over 1000m of elevation), still in use today, connects the smaller streams of the upper Long River to the course of the Jian'an River. No 2nd century CE cave was reported in Lichuan County to this day: local archaeological administration attributed all burial caves to Tang times, or at the earliest, to the Southern Dynasties. This late attribution is partly due to the single find of a wooden coffin in the 70s, which was re-used for burial in the 9th-11th centuries. The 142.5 x 32 x 38cm *nanmu* 楠木 coffin stored in the archaeological office of Lichuan county was collected from the site of Shilongba and contains one complete adult skeleton. Previous to my survey, only the remains of a brick tomb found in a field in Longshui, less than 10km from a cliff cemetery, suggested the presence of Eastern Han funerary culture in the area. This study, however, managed to identify a cluster of five rock-cut cemetery sites along the Jian'an River that fully respond to the characteristics of Type 2 caves. The best example is Qikongzi in terms of location, cave typology and the presence of carved depictions and inscriptions.

Let us compare Qikongzi and Qigedong, respectively the westernmost and easternmost sites considered in this thesis. Both sites are raised above ground. The Qikongzi caves are perched at up to 20m, while the highest cave in Qigedong only reaches about 12m. Both sites show recessed doorframes and outdoor depictions or inscriptions. The inscription in Qikongzi is barely decipherable because of the height, but its epigraphic style bears strong similarities to the corpus of inscriptions gathered throughout my study area, which indicates that they belong to a similar date. In Qigedong however, all caves are chambers with triple recessed openings, while the

type of caves and treatment of doorframes (both the number of recessions and their dimensions) varies in Qikongzi (**Fig.5.17**).



5.17. Qikongzi. Lichuan county, Hubei province.

Particularly, one niche-like cave and one tunnel-like cave are present among the chambers in Qikongzi. We have seen that such types are consistently found along the Xishui, Longtan, and Long Rivers, and we will encounter them systematically along the Qi River in the next chapter. The indoor wall and ceiling dressings in Qikongzi are also consistent with Type 2 cave decoration : surfaces are compartmented and filled with fan-like or fishbone patterns. In terms of depictions, line-carved towers are the most often encountered decorative element along the Jian'an,²² as well as birds and fishes carved on the indoor walls. Odd variations specific to Qikongzi are the relief caryatids on the lintel of a chamber-like cave (See Fig.8.19). Finally, no rock-cut coffin is found in the chambers in Qikongzi while as we have seen above, rock-cut coffins in Qigedong are imputable to influences from the Luzhou plain.

This section departed from Qigedong, located in a mountainous enclave south of the Yangzi, to end in Qikongzi, about 500km further east, thereby encompassing the full extent of the upper Yangzi River. Southern tributaries of the Yangzi connecting the Sichuan plain and the Three Gorges area to the Guizhou highlands are a potential

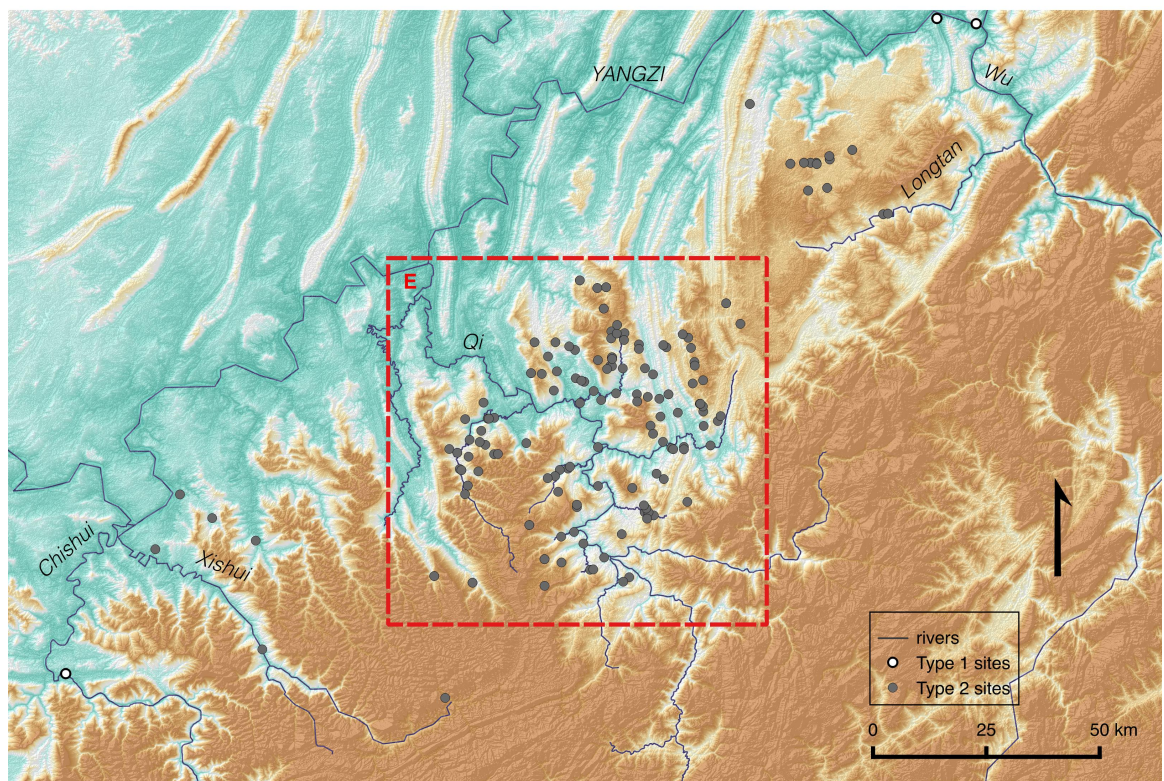
²² See figures 11.6.6.6.1, 11.6.6.6.2 and 11.6.6.6.3 in the appendix to Chapter 8: Catalogue.

destination for groups settling along secondary routes with respects to major tributaries of the Yangzi River.

The next section looks at the Qi River valley. Among all minor tributaries of the Yangzi and of the four major rivers investigated above, the Qi River area contains the biggest proportion of inscribed and datable caves, and the highest concentration of Type 2 rock-cut cemeteries.

5.3. Where Type 2 sites become mainstream: the Qi River

The Qi River stands in between two major axes: to its west, the Chishui River and to its east, the Wu River (**Fig.5.18**). According to Han period administrative geography, the Qi River stood at the border between Qianwei commandery, centered on the Chishui River, and Ba commandery, centered on the Wu River. Both commanderies were founded in the Western Han and supplied large scale settlements such as Huangjinwan by the 1st century BCE. The Qi River inscriptions, our main dating evidence, point at a secondary development in the late 2nd century CE, as there is no current evidence for large-scale occupation of the area for early Han times.



5.18. E: Location of the Type 2 Qi River sites within the Type 1/Type 2 sites comparisons.

This section analyzes the distribution of cemeteries along the Qi River and its tributaries. Covering its full length from the point where it reaches the Yangzi, upstream to its sources in the highlands, the section retraces the sequence of how administrative centres were implanted in the area by imperial authorities through history. In the light of these events, the distribution and characteristics of cemeteries start to make sense and specific areas and sites can be prioritized.

5.3.1. The Qi River route

The Qi River, also known as “River of the Bo people” (*Bo xi* 焚溪),²³ is fed by the Songkan 松坎河 and the Yangdu 楊渡河 rivers, which originate in Mount Wumen 烏蒙山, a section of the Dalou Mountain range 大婁山 in present day Guizhou province. It is 230km long, for a surface of 7,020,000 sq.m. The main tributaries of the Qi River, exceeding 300,000s q.m. are: on its west bank, the Sunxi 筍溪河 and Qingxi 清溪河 rivers, and on its east bank, the Pu 蒲河 and Caodu 藻渡河 rivers. Smaller tributaries reaching a surface between 100,000 and 300,000 sq.m. are: on its west bank, the Guofu River 郭扶河 and on its east bank, the Zhenxi 臻溪河 (also called Fuhuan 扶歡河) and the Tonghui 通惠河 rivers.²⁴

Based on Tang dynasty accounts (circa 7th century CE), three steps are given by Yan Gengwang on the course of the Qi River, connecting present day Jiangjin city on the Yangzi River to the highlands. The steps are spaced about 150 to 200 *li* (50 to 65km) (**Fig.5.19**).²⁵ Although this route headed to the highlands, it also formed a 1300 *li* (420km) long loop going back to the Yangzi, by following the Wu River downstream. The route functioned as a circuit connecting both ends of the Three Gorges corridor to the two plains of Sichuan and Hubei-Hunan, with backstage access to Han centres for trade and industry located directly on the Yangzi (**Fig.5.20**).

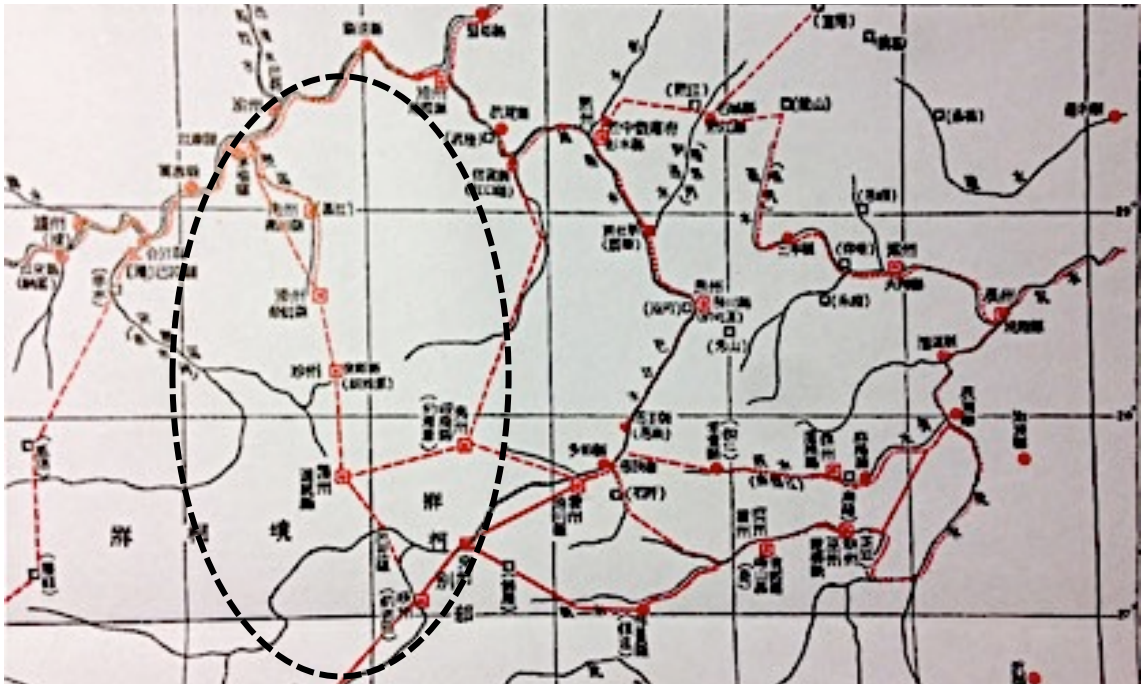
Present-day location	Ancient zhou (town)	Ancient xian (county)	River
Jiangjin city 江津市	Yuzhou 渝州		Yangzi, Qi
Qijiang city 綦江區	Nanzhou 南州	Nanchuan 南川縣	Qi, Tonghui
Qinnian district 青年鎮	Zhenzhou 臻州		Zhenxi
Tongzi county 桐梓縣	Zhenzhou 珍州	Yelang 夜郎縣	Chishui
Zunyi county 遵義縣	Bozhou 播州	Zunyi 遵義縣	

5.19. Steps on the Qi River route according to the *Yuanhe junxian tuzhi*. Source: Yan Gengwang 1986:1298.

²³ Yan Gengwang 1986:1298.

²⁴ Hydropower Atlas 2010.

²⁵ Yan Gengwang 1986:1298.



5.20. The Boxi route. Source: Yan Gengwang 1986:1298.

Boxi functioned as a route of penetration into the plateau, combining navigable sections with side valley routes or mountain passes. Meanwhile, the navigable lower Wu River was used for trade both ways between the Yangzi and the highlands. A similar pairing of major and minor routes was encountered in the section above for the Jinsha and Chishui rivers.

5.3.2. Imperial administration along the Qi River (5th to 13th century CE)

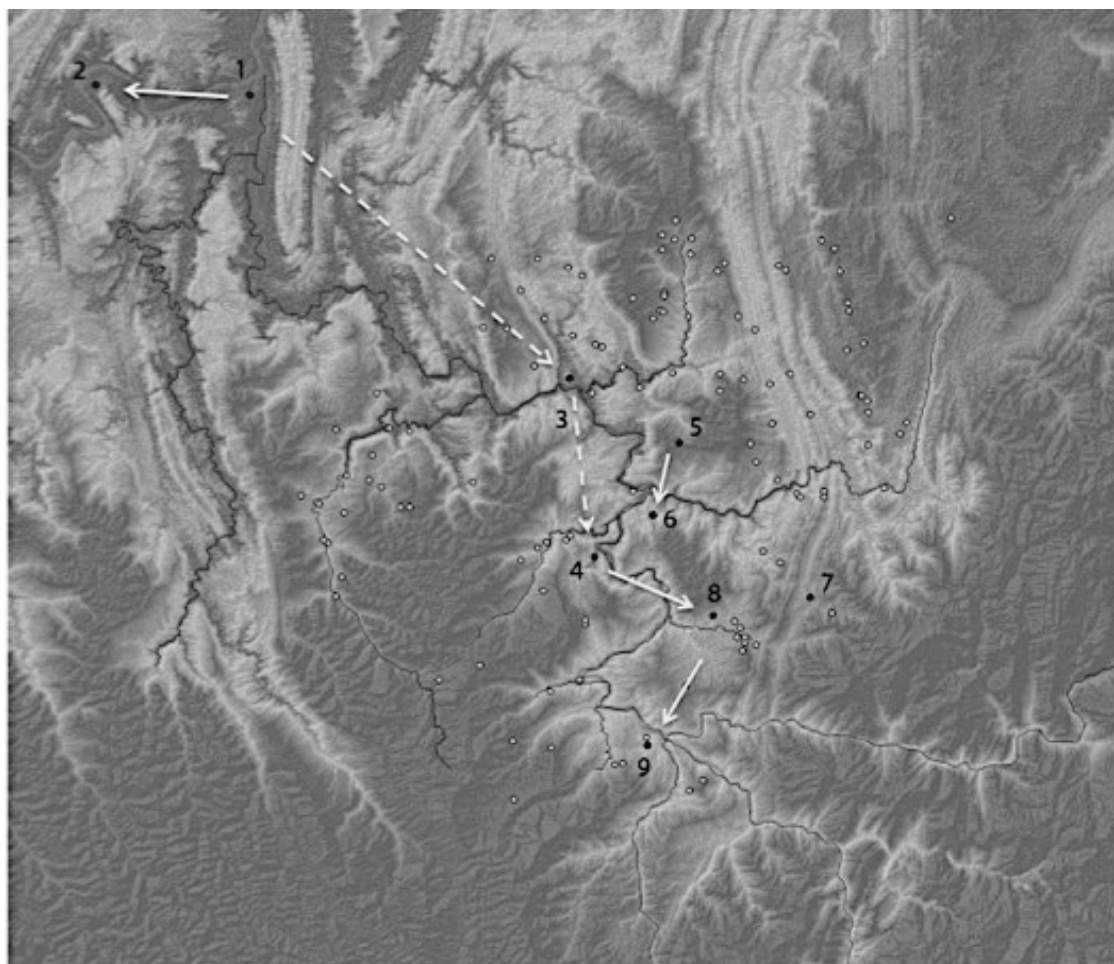
Byon compiled information from the earliest available local gazetteers for present day Qijiang county.²⁶ While the area played a strategic role early on, it was officially established as a county only in Tang times (7th-8th century CE). Before that, the river valley played its connecting role in unofficial ways. Byon notes that administrative denominations are abolished or modified in Song times (9th-12th century CE), and that under the Yuan dynasty (13th-14th century CE), a native chieftaincy (*tusi* 土司) was established in the Qi River area. The area was reintegrated to the empire as a county-level centre called Qijiang 綦江縣, its modern name, in Ming times (15th century CE).²⁷ It is only more than two centuries after our latest dated cave, that precise locations are available for administrative centres along the Qi River. In this subsection, we follow the establishment of nine towns by successive imperial governments between 487 CE and

²⁶ Byon 1979. entry number S-B06H.

²⁷ Available local gazetteers are compilations from the early 19th century on. Qijiang xian zhi.

1078 CE. All nine are marked in the following map concurrently to the location of Type 2 cemeteries (Fig.5.21).

no.	name	level	begin year CE	end year CE	present day location
1	Jiangzhou 江州	xian	487	553	Xianfeng district, Jiangjin
	Jiangyang 江陽	xian	554	597	
	Jiangjin 江津	xian	598	966	
2	Jiangjin 江津	xian	967	1911	Jiangjin city
3	Longyang 隆陽	xian	619	711	Qijiang city
	Nanchuan 南川	xian	712	1074	
4	Danxi 丹溪	xian	619	642	Guofu district
5	Yingshan	xian	630	638	Sanjiao-Tonghui-Pu River
6	Sanxi 三溪	xian	631	983	Pu River
7	Rongyi 榮懿	xian	642	1070	upper Zhenxi River
8	Fuhuan 扶歡	xian	642	1070	Zhenxi River
9	Nanping 南平	jun	1075	1238	Ganshui district
	Nanchuan 南川	xian	1078	1284	



5.21. Nine centres founded from 487 to 1078 CE. Source: County-level administrative seats from CHGIS Time Series. Updated in January 2012. (1) Jiangzhou/Jiangyang/Jiangjin, (2) Jiangjin, (3) Longyang/Nanchuan, (4) Danxi, (5) Yingshan, (6) Sanxi, (7) Rongyi, (8) Fuhuan, (9), Nanping/Nanchuan.

The first centre on the Qi River to be recorded in written sources was founded in Southern Qi times (487 CE), at the mouth of the river, where the latter meets the Yangzi **(no.1)**. This early centre was renamed by successive reigns as Jiangzhou, Jiangyang and Jiangjin. Its location moved only 500 years later, in Song times (967 CE) to the location of present day Jiangjin city, Chongqing municipality **(no.2)**. Within these 500 years, administrative centres were established in “waves” upstream on the Qi River.

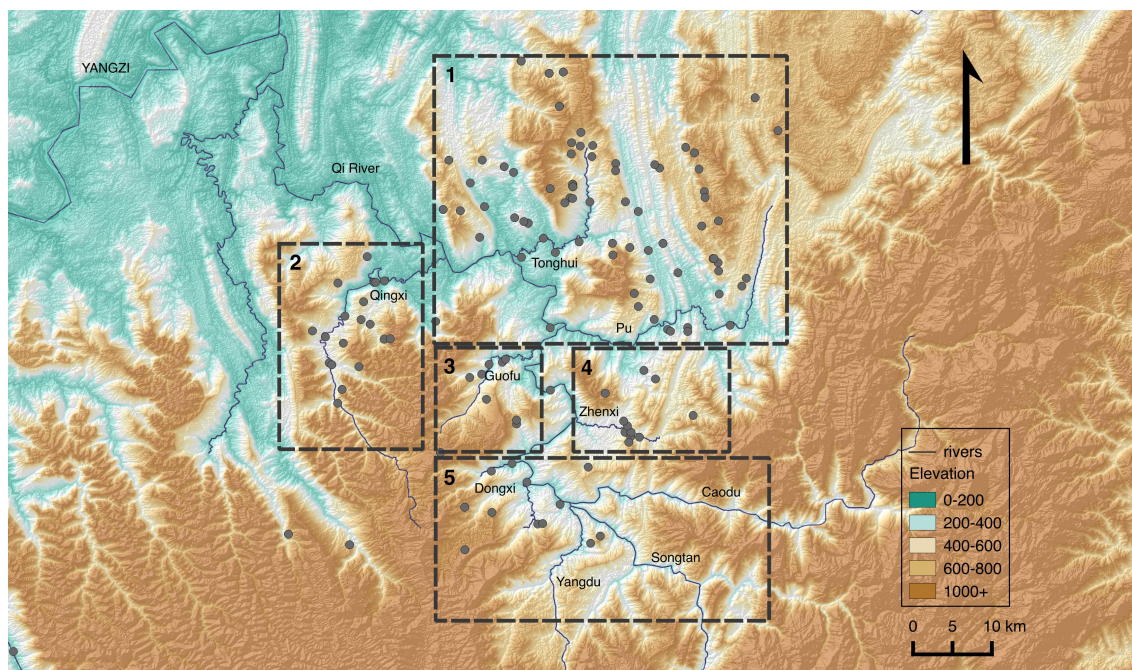
By Tang times (619 CE), the second wave of administrative rule reached the last large valley on the Qi River, where the latter encounters the Tonghui tributary, and established a county-level seat on the location of present day Qijiang city, Chongqing municipality **(no.3)**. The city was called Longyang, renamed Nanchuan in 712 CE, and was abolished in 1074 CE. Contemporaneously, further upstream, at the point where the Qi River meets the Guofu tributary, a county-level seat named Danxi was established, but it only lasted for about 20 years, until 642 CE **(no.4)**. Another seat named Yingshan, located in a mountainous zone between the Tonghui and Pu tributaries **(no.5)**, was established in 630 CE and abandoned only eight years later. The way these two short-lived seats were readily abandoned and displaced further upstream the Qi River within the next couple of decade, reinforces the impression of a “moving wall”, a frontier that would gradually climb up the piedmont towards the highlands.

In a third wave of administrative rule, comparatively durable seats were established, between 631 CE and 642 CE (Sanxi, Rongyi and Fuhuan in **no.6, 7 and 8**). Rongyi and Fuhuan were county seats under the larger administrative unit of Zhenzhou 秦州, later Zhenxi commandery 秦溪郡.²⁸ These three seats lasted for more than three centuries, down to Song times (1070 CE). A major reconfiguration of frontier policies in Song times lasting until the Yuan (1075 CE to 1284 CE) led to the establishment of Nanchuan, the county seat for Nanping commandery 南平郡, on the location of present-day Ganshui district town **(no.9)**. Nanping has been associated since Tang times with a particularly active branch of the Lao people (*Nanping Lao* 南平僚), whose

²⁸ Timeline 61.

influence apparently extended well beyond the course of the Qi River.²⁹ The location served later as an outpost to control highland polities based in present day Zunyi county. Apart from this military function, it also stood out as a market for horse trade under the Song.

The administrative history laid above indicates sections of the Qi River which played a significant role at the scale of a millennium : the mouth of the river in no.1, the middle course plain around no.3, and the gateways to the highlands in no.6, no.7 and no.8. Conversely, no.9 only grew in importance in the last couple of centuries. Based on these observations, let us identify significant territorial units to group rock-cut cemeteries along the Qi River. On the following map, sites are roughly grouped according to their relation to waterways (**Fig.5.22**). A first area is more populous, with regularly spaced sites between the Tonghui and Pu, both tributaries of the middle Qi River (**frame no.1**). The three following groups of sites are strongly connected to single tributaries of the Qi River, with one group along the Qingxi (**frame no.2**), one group along the Guofu (**frame no.3**), and a last group clustered on the Zhenxi tributary (**frame no.4**). A fifth and last area gathers the fewer and sparser sites of the upper Qi River (**frame no.5**). The subsections below investigate the distribution of cemetery sites in each of the above-listed territorial units.

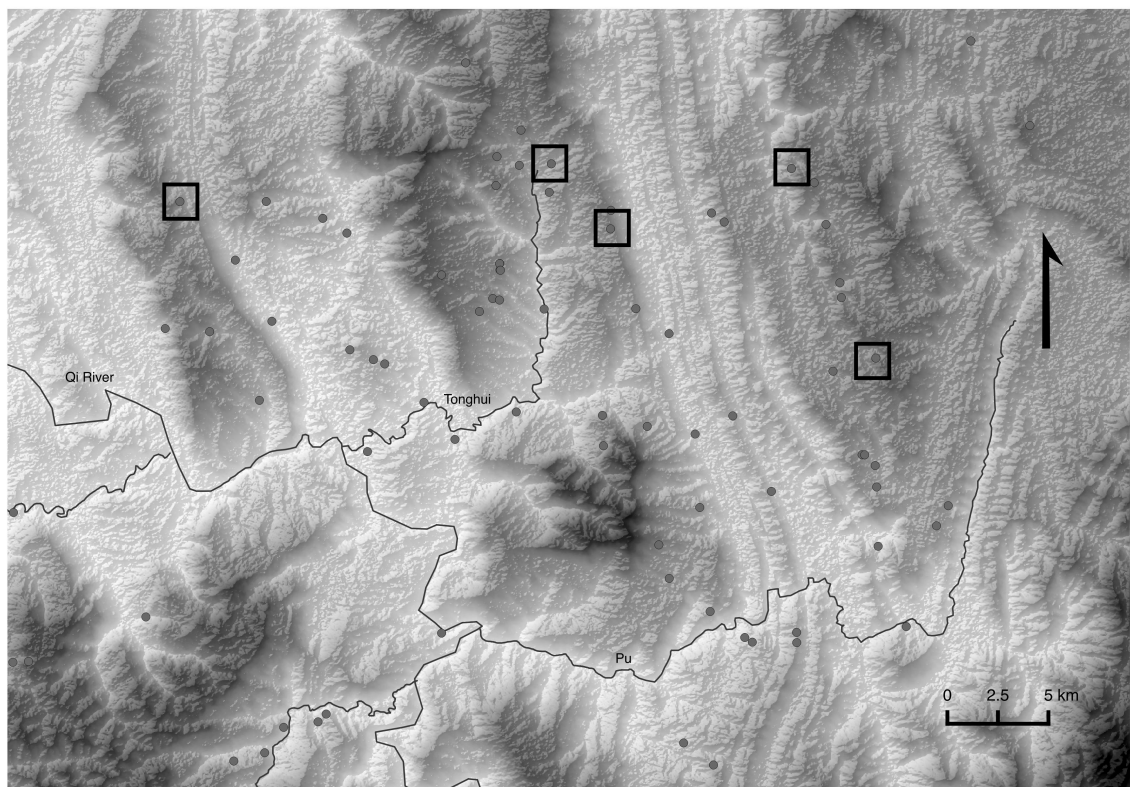


5.22. Suggested division for the Qi River sites : (1) Middle Qi River, (2) Qingxi River, (3) Guofu River, (4) Zhenxi River, (5) upper Qi River.

²⁹ Timeline 62.

5.3.3. A “continuous periphery”: The middle Qi River sites (no.1 on Fig.5.23)

The middle Qi River sites represent the bulk of rock-cut cemeteries in the whole Qi River area. Set in a hilly landscape, the middle course of the river acquires a smoother slope of 1.3° and widens to 60-100m. The plain especially widens on its eastern bank, along the Pu and Tonghui tributaries, originating in Banan district. While a large number of sites are located in these lower elevations, by looking closer at the relief one notices that most sites, especially bigger sized cemeteries, are not located directly on the Pu or Tonghui rivers but rather in the mountainous ranges in-between the rivers or beyond. Rather than being located in the valleys, large sites thus prefer mountainous terrain. The only few sites located at lower elevations, are enclaved by the vertical zonation created by the mountains (**Fig.5.23**).



5.23. Pu and Tonghui tributary sites with 5 framed sites exceeding 20 caves.

To be included in the same area are another 24 sites that do not belong to the modern administrative boundaries of Qijiang district, being located instead in Nanchuan and Banan districts. All are contained within the reach of the upper Pu and Tonghui rivers. The Nanchuan, Banan and middle Qi River sites form a continuous peripheral belt

running south of the Yangzi. Their tight distribution, with only 1 to 7km between cemeteries, suggests that several sites could serve a single settlement. No rock-cut cemetery is known on the location of present day Qijiang city, where administrative centres are reported a few centuries later, but the isolated find of a moulded brick was reported within the precincts of the modern agglomeration, suggesting that burials in brick chambers might have been in use here instead of rock-cut tombs.

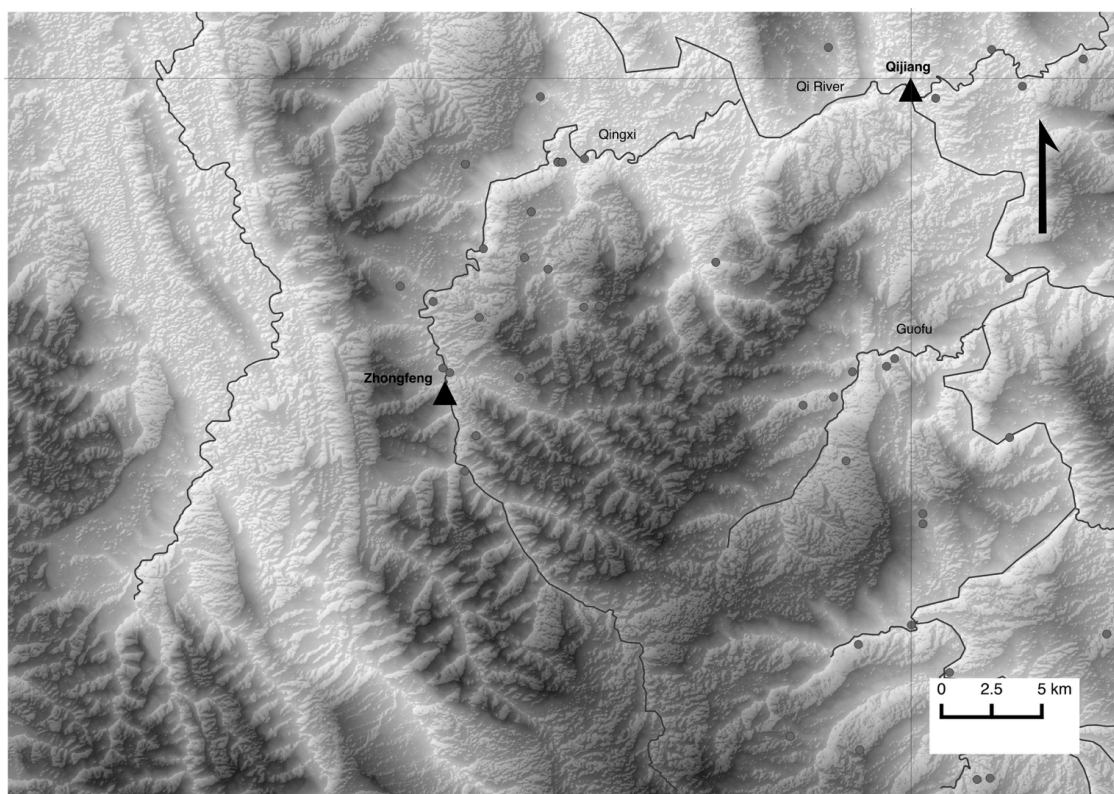
Not represented on the map in Fig.5.23, are the sites in the lower Qi River, which feeds into the Yangzi River 70km further downstream. Here, the river is about 80-150m wide, with a slope reduced to 0.5°, thus flowing in a much smoother landscape, and in a wider valley. This lowland area belongs to present day Jiangjin district, where 44 sites are known of which seven have reported rock-cut coffins, 13 have rock-cut niches and two have rock-cut stoves.³⁰

5.3.4. A side route: The Qingxi tributary (no.2 on Fig.5.23)

Downstream Qijiang city, the Qi River receives the waters of the Qingxi tributary from the west. The Qingxi originates in Guizhou Province, it is 61km long, has a superficies of 414,000 sq.m. and its strongest registered discharge reaches 4930 m³/second.³¹ With its meandering narrow bed, the Qingxi functions as a handy corridor-like route for those who renounce following the Qi River main course and prefer a backstage route leading to the course of the Xishui River. By providing access to the Xishui, the Qingxi tributary constitutes a transversal, secondary connection between the Qi River and the next southern tributary of the Yangzi on its east (**Fig.5.24**).

³⁰ Such furnishings are common in Type 1 tombs but very rare in the Qi River cemeteries. Among the sites that are typologically close to Type 1 cemeteries, four sites (yakou, yantoushang, zhoujia, zhaojia) are located in Xianfeng district, near the first location of Jiangzhou/Jiangyang/Jiangjin xian/county. Refer to General Appendix (site_ID : C-J-xxx).

³¹ Hydropower Atlas 2010.



5.24. Qingxi Tributary area centered on the district town of Zhongfeng, downstream the county-level seat city of Qijiang. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality.

As will be further developed in Chapter 6, the Qingxi River yields the earliest dated cave of our inscribed caves' dataset, and has the longest record of occupation (106 CE to 220 CE). A time lapse of occupation from 165 to 210 CE is even available for one of the surveyed sites, Baishulin: this 45 years period, about two generations, corresponds to a group of only three caves. On the Qingxi River, along a 20km section of the river, 20 sites are known, with a total of 128 caves. If we count about two individuals per cave, we could estimate a population density of 13 inhabitants/sq.km.

Another distinctive trait of the Qingxi is the treatment of cave openings: more than half of triple-recessed cave openings in the whole Qi River area are located in the Qingxi tributary valley. This suggests that extra care was taken to refine the outer appearance of caves along that specific river course. This element, together with the meandering topography of the deep-cut riverbed, contributes to create particular conditions of visibility and intervisibility.

The Qingxi is the perfect example of a canyon-and-plateau morphology with terraces (*ping*) and alluvial plains (*ba*) (Fig.5.25).

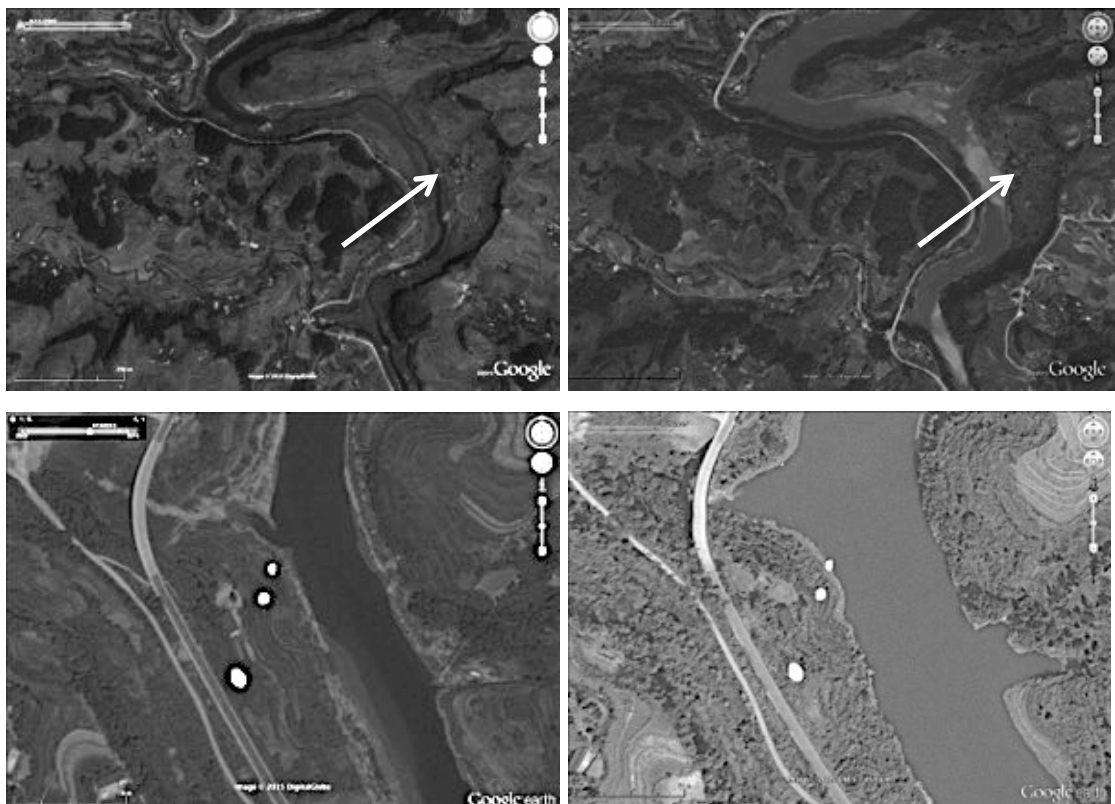


5.25. A landscape of *ping* and *ba* along the Qingxi River with visible burial caves. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality.

The instability of the flat, floodable riverbanks makes them mostly unsuitable for settlers, who traditionally chose to build above the river canyons, on top of the sandstone cliffs, or on the protected side of wider meanders. When surveying sites along the Xishui River just after severe flooding in July 2014, I could witness how new-

built cement houses along the riverside road were covered in mud and stone blocks from landslides. Instead, older settlements and isolated farmers' houses located higher up, farther from the river, or on the protected sites of the river meanders, remained intact. Due to periods of monsoon and heavy summer rains, as well as the narrow beds and flat banks of the rivers composed of sandstone and mudstone, flooding provokes much damage, destroying settlements and towns.³² The fact that most caves are cut in boulders scattered on the flat, floodable riverbanks, or on the vertical cliff faces below the elevated platforms, suggest that the tombs occupied a type of land unsuitable to settle on. The value of the land on which Type 2 caves are located is thus not necessarily related to its suitability for farming. Paired aerial views of the Laodongyan and Qikongzi heba sites show the difference in water level that can occur between the dry and wet seasons, which can go up to 15-20m (**Fig.5.26 and 27**).

Exposure to flooding, the visibility, accessibility, and the value of the land on which Type 2 caves are located are points to which I will come back in the next chapter, when defining a typology for Type 2 cemeteries.



5.26. The Qingxi River meander at the location of the Laodongyan and Qikongzi heba sites in winter/dry season (November 2002) and summer/wet season (August 2014, after the Three Gorges dam was built). Source: 28°56'8.87"N and 106°26'9.90"E. Google Earth. 2017. last date of access August 25, 2017.

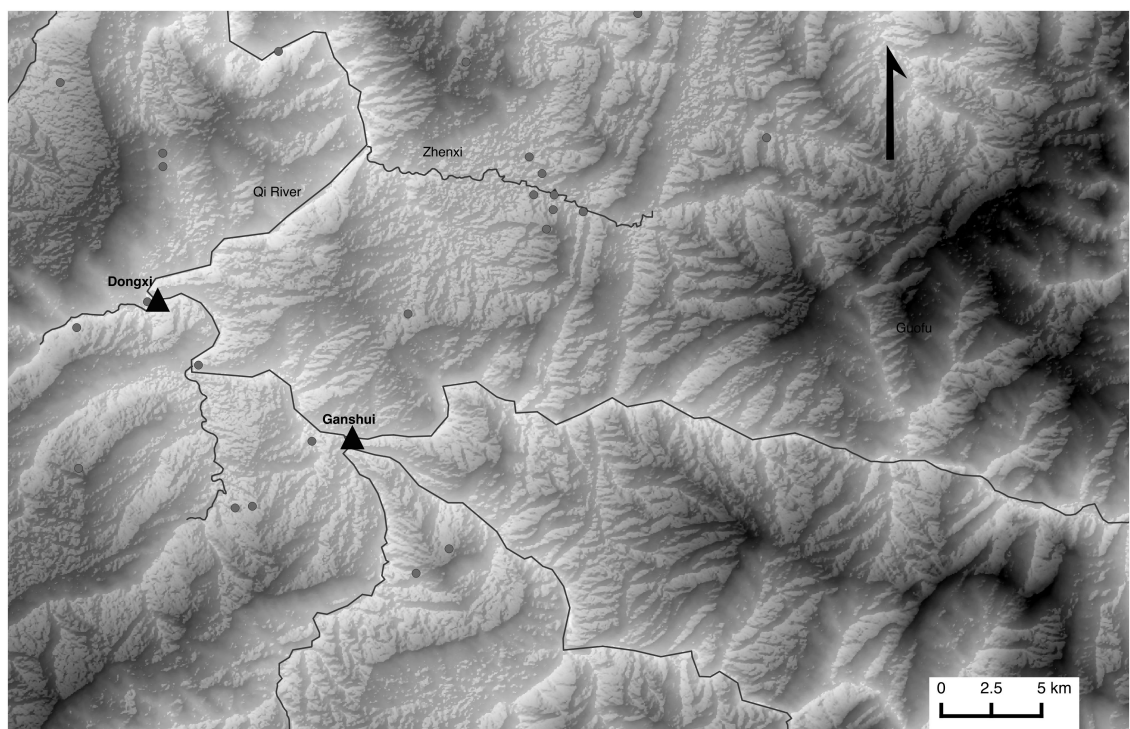
³² Timeline 63.



5.27. Flooding lines on the boulder in Qikongzi heba. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality.

5.3.5. Between water and land routes: The Zhenxi tributary (no.4 on Fig.5.23)

The Zhenxi tributary brings together several interesting aspects: a trade node traceable in transmitted sources, a point where navigability on the Qi River becomes problematic, a potential land route connecting valleys down to the Yangzi River, an elevated plateau with plenty of flat, arable land, and the densest concentration of Eastern Han caves in the whole course of the Qi River. As compared to the distribution of cemeteries along any other tributary of the Qi River, the seven cemeteries along the Zhenxi are closer to one another and isolated from other sites (**Fig.5.28**).



5.28. Zhenxi Tributary area, with respects to the towns of Dongxi and Ganshui. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality.

60km upstream the middle Qi River, one encounters a coarser mountain geomorphology interrupted by several waterfalls. The last stop before navigation becomes impossible is present day Dongxi district town 東溪鎮, 4km before Ganshui district town 趕水鎮, the administrative centre of ancient Nanping. Upstream Dongxi, more than a hundred rapids interrupt the course of the Qi River, at intervals of roughly one kilometre. Some of them are imposing and protracted, such as Gaishidong 蓋石峒, 13km downstream Ganshui, a 500m-long difficult section with a 13.5m drop, or Yangtidong 羊蹄峒, 4km downstream Ganshui, a 1km-long difficult section with a 6m drop. Because of these obstacles to navigation upstream its haven, the town of Dongxi historically acted as a portage and as a salt trade centre. Southward land routes to the highlands departing from the Zhenxi valley exempted one to push further upstream after Dongxi, and to face the waterfalls between Dongxi and Ganshui. Dongxi holds remains of salt merchant residencies from Ming and Qing times. Stone paved paths dating to these later periods connect the Zhenxi valley to the point where the tributary meets the Qi River, where there used to be a portage point. In Dongxi, just like in Fuxing along the Chishui River surveyed in the previous chapter, one and a half thousand years of blank archaeological record lies between the Eastern Han rock-cut cemeteries and Ming-Qing period remains. This could be explained by the fact that only in premodern times is the extent of Eastern Han routes matched by the presence of salt harbours, wealthy merchants' residences and stone-paved paths across highland areas.

As seen above, the major node located along the Qi River on the route connecting the Yangzi to the Guizhou plateau is the Tang period administrative seat of Zhenzhou 溱州. Zhenzhou was located right on the course of the Zhenxi tributary,³³ roughly halfway between the administrative seat of Nanzhou 南州, Nanchuan county 南川縣 (present day Qijiang county-level city) and the administrative seat of Zhenzhou 珍州, Yelang county 夜郎縣 (10km east of present day Tongzi county, Guizhou province). My own field survey has made clear that the water route was not the only one to connect Zhenzhou to the Yangzi. Although the Zhenxi is surrounded by mountains, it leads to

³³ Yan Gengwang 1986:1298.

corridors running between mountainous ridges to the east, which connect the Zhenxi valley more directly to the course of the Yangzi than does the meandering course of the Qi River. The corridors continue southwards, reaching the route to Bi, which places the valley in a privileged position in terms of transportation and trade. The Zhenxi valley was thus a major node on a land route connecting the Yangzi to the highlands.

The Zhenxi valley is a raised area of flat land of considerable extent if compared to the type of land available south of the Yangzi. This plateau, propitious for agriculturalist groups to settle in, could accommodate a numerous population and larger agglomerations, as it is reflected in the size and distribution of the cemeteries further analysed in Chapter 6. Among the Zhenxi tributary sites is the biggest cemetery in the whole of the Qi River area, Xinlianqiao, with 87 tombs, far above the next bigger cemetery, Jiepai (47 tombs). Only a few hundred metres separate Xinlianqiao from four smaller cemeteries counting 18, 11, 3 and 2 caves. This cluster of cemeteries, located on both sides of the Zhenxi tributary, about 10km from the Qi River course, is set on a plateau at 500m of elevation, against a mountainous chain reaching 1,300m. The five sites, with a total of 142 caves, are clustered in an area of less than 3 sq.km. If we count about two individuals per cave, the estimated population density would be around 100 inhabitants per sq.km. The settlers were active in the area around the year 165 CE (dated inscription in Songlinggang), but no measure of the time lapse of occupation is available. The Songlinggang site, with 11 caves located at 530m of elevation, has niche-like caves, which, just like the niches in Sanchahe, display carved depictions on the back wall that are visible from the foot of the cliff (**Figure 5.29**).



5.29. A decorated niche-like cave in Songlinggang. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality.

Despite typological similarities between rock-cut cemeteries along the Zhenxi tributary and Type 2 cemeteries along the Qi River, the Shihutou site, with 18 caves at 520m of elevation, cumulates several iconographical elements that are not found elsewhere in the Qi River area, and that are instead commonly encountered in Type 1 rock-cut caves, further discussed in Chapter 8. An inscription in Shihutou refers to 122 CE,³⁴ an early date with respects to other Type 2 sites in the Qi River area. These lead one to think that the area was more exposed to the passage of ideas from the Sichuan plain, and at an early stage.

5.3.6. Upper Qi River sites: No relationship to water streams (no.5 on Fig.5.23)

The upper Qi River flows for 80km from its source to Ganshui district town. It has a 13° sloping bed, with strong currents, and a narrow course which is only about 30-40m wide most of the year. Its shallow bed is covered in protruding stones of irregular size. The speed of its current is about 2-3m per second. For these reasons, the upper Qi River is mostly not suitable for navigation. Traction by animals or men was needed for boats going upstream, but also to guide and control the direction of boats going downstream. Boatmen were often obliged to step in the water and push the boat, with the risk to touch the bed of the river. Only three sites are reported in the upper Qi River area: Houwan, Taigongpu, and Shangbangou. All three sites have single layered doorframes, all high placed, and of the chamber type. The upper Qi River sites relate only weakly to water streams.

5.3.7. Type 2 sites distribution along the Qi River

In this section, apart from identifying a route that left little to no trace in official histories, we went one step further in understanding how cemeteries are distributed along a single river, following an upstream movement. Increased attention was paid to side routes such as the Qingxi valley, or obligatory passages such as the Zhenxi plateau. This way, one gets a finer sense of how navigability and topography matter in the land south of the Yangzi. By comparing the characteristics of cemeteries along the Qingxi and Zhenxi tributaries, one realizes how increasing degrees of connectivity, or the type of activity wherein settlers were involved, determine different intensities of contact with major trade axes and civilizational centres of the plain.

³⁴ Refer to Table A42 in Appendix to Chapter 7: Inscriptions Table.

A distinction can be drawn between sites in the upper and lower course of the Qi River:

- Lower course: Cemeteries avoid the main course of the Qi River (Qingxi valley). They are located inland, around 800-900m elevations, possibly to avoid Type 1 centres. Estimate for population density for the Qingxi valley is 13 inhabitants/sq.km.
- Upper course: Cemeteries are set close to portage towns (Zhenxi valley). They stand on strategic ground, nodes in the network where the routes to the highlands gather into one single trunk. The cave builders probably relied on trade, passage rights, storage fee, and transportation fees. Estimate for population density for the Zhenxi valley is 100 inhabitants/sq.km.

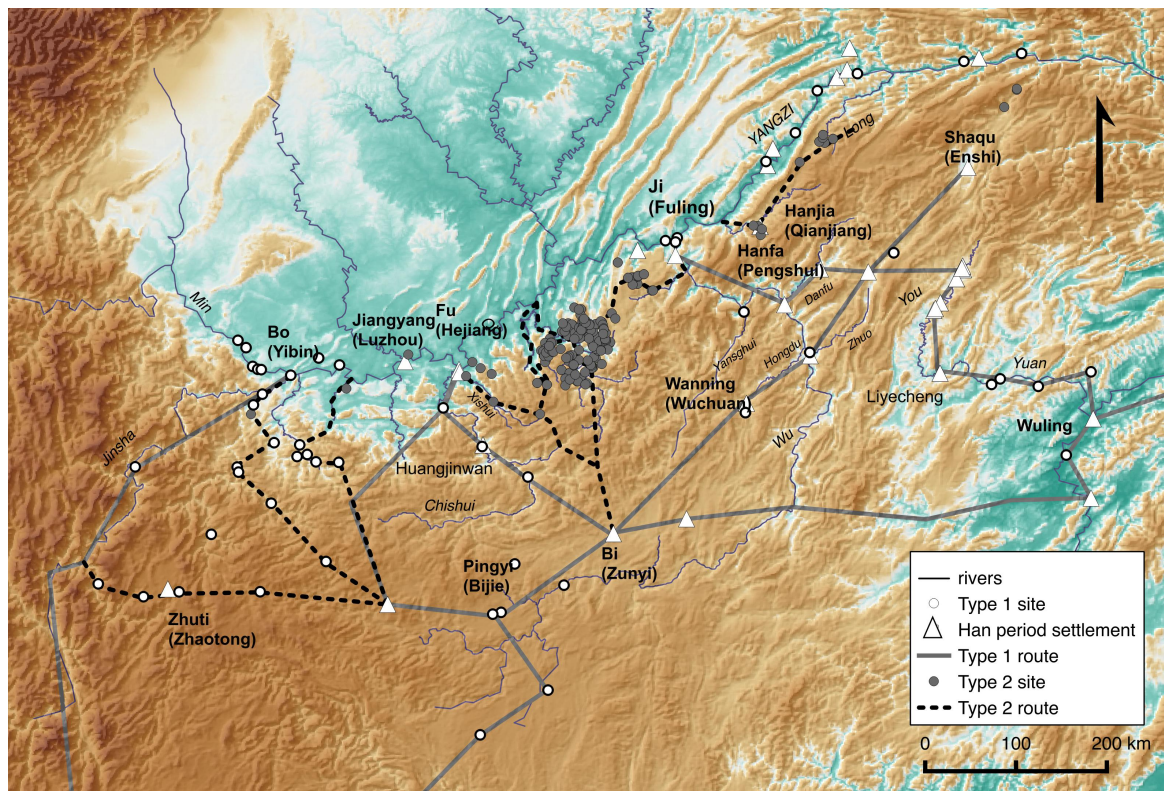
5.4. Summary: Minor routes south of the Yangzi

Through comparative survey, the distribution of Type 1 and Type 2 rock-cut cemeteries was found to correspond to a hierarchy between minor and major southern tributaries of the Yangzi. This reconstruction predates any detailed account of the area in historical sources, and draws a regional network of southward routes between plain and highlands. In contrast to Type 1 Han tombs south of the Yangzi, the characteristics of Type 2 caves are the following: caves are cut into vertical cliffs, they are raised above ground with no trench or corridor, visible cave entrances are enhanced by carved recessions, smaller-sized caves sometimes adopt a niche-like or tunnel-like shape, line-carved outdoor depictions and inscriptions are present, with no direct reference to the domestic sphere. Type 2 caves will be completed in the next chapter.

Based on these characteristics, this chapter mapped the whole extent of Type 2 cemeteries. It attested that Type 2 caves encompass the whole course of the upper Yangzi River, as they span from Yibin city at the mouth of the Jinsha River in Sichuan province, where the Yangzi River starts, to the vicinity of Yichang city in Hubei province, where the Yangzi gorges end. Type 2 cemeteries thus occupy a complete ecological unit of about 500km long. The sites along the Longtan and Jian'an rivers are among the most crucial finds of this study. While they were erroneously attributed to at least 500 years later, this study rectified their dating back to late Eastern Han times

based on both epigraphic and iconographic evidence. The easternmost site of Qikongzi in Lichuan county is strikingly similar to the westernmost site of Qigedong among Type 2 cemeteries. Such consistency establishes a firm ground to argue that Type 2 rock-cut caves are not a local expression in the periphery of a periphery, but rather, a coherent and extended phenomenon, at the scale of the whole southwest frontier (See Fig.3.2).

The distribution of Type 2 sites corresponds almost systematically to minor southern tributaries remaining unmentioned in written sources, such as the Qi, the Changning and the Longtan rivers, or which play a secondary role in history, such as the Xishui River. These branches of the network are represented in dotted lines on the map below (**Fig.5.30**). As suggested by their absence from the front stage of history, some minor routes remained out of step, while others specialized in long-distance trade. It is along such minor tributaries that a case can be made for the existence of communities subsisting on alternative types of activity, developing specific cultural expressions such as the caves investigated here, in a landscape of their own. Such communities would be coextant with major routes and hubs, but mainly standing on transversal connections between these routes, perhaps less exposed to the on-going process of Imperial collapse. It is even possible that their blooming precisely at a time of weakness of major river courses points at the strategic advantage of being located in side valleys and behind mountainous barriers, thereby forming a parallel network of routes.



5.30. Minor routes (dotted lines) among major routes (grey lines) south of the Yangzi.

With the Qi River sites, this study has the opportunity to go from the wide narrative of a regional tradition, to that of local cave-making practice by groups of people who probably interacted on frequent basis. Indeed, cultural references in rock-cut caves south of the Yangzi is not only made to tombs in the plain, but also to similar groups in neighbouring valleys, or further along the same river. This way, the tradition we are looking at here might be less a regional adaptation than a myriad of interconnected local constructs, following their own rules and establishing their own traits. The following chapter will investigate the definition of such a stone working tradition, its relation to space, cultural exchange and transmission.

6. Type 2 cemeteries and caves on the Qi River (綦)

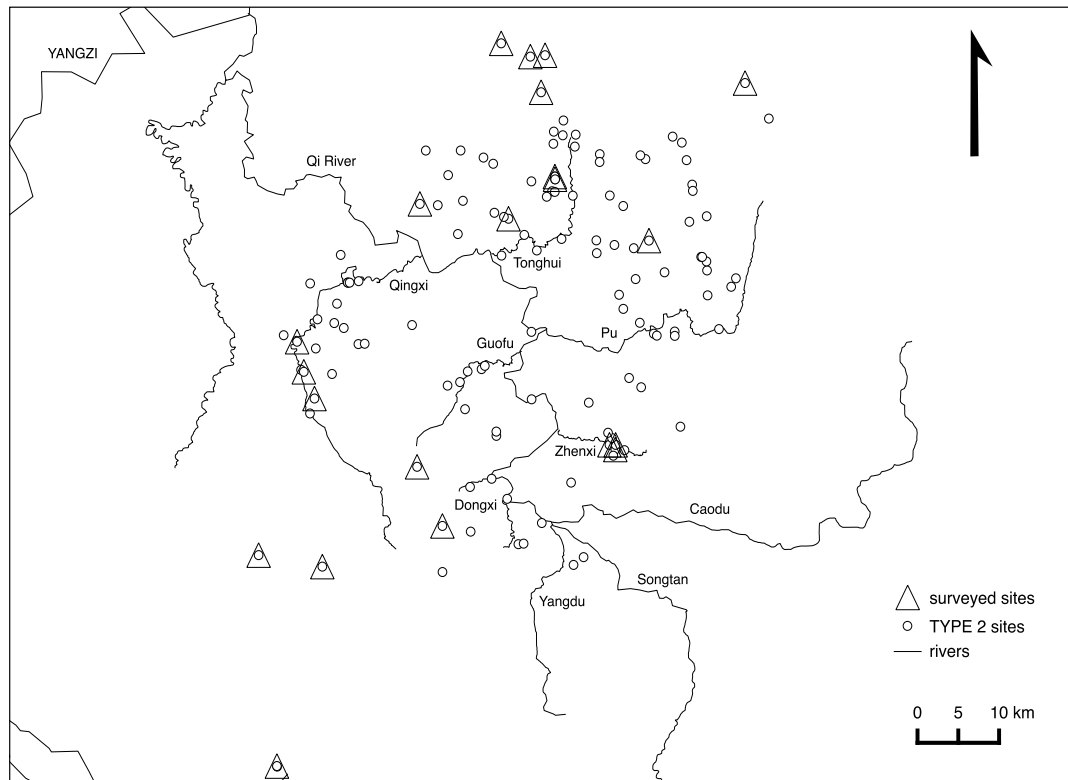
This chapter focuses on one of the minor southern tributaries of the Yangzi: the Qi River in present day Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. As established in the last section of the previous chapter, this river valley is ideally located between the Chishui and Wu River routes. Not only is it located on the frontier of the declining Eastern Han Empire, but it also forms a borderland between important provincial centres and routes. Until my survey the archaeological record of this area had remained largely unnoticed, but the work presented here demonstrates a funerary landscape containing exclusively Type 2 tombs (**Fig.6.1**).

An appendix to Chapter 6 entitled “11.3. Qi River dataset” provides a list of all cemeteries in the Qi River area and tables for the caves’ specific features.

Following the comparison of various categories of Type 1 caves to a string of rather uniform Type 2 caves led in the previous two chapters, this chapter draws a profile of the Type 2 cave-cutting tradition for one single tributary, in three steps. In the first section, 34 dated caves, most of them located in the Qi River area, are used as a reference group for the whole Qi River dataset. Two areas of great interest for their contrasting role in terms of routes within the Qi River system, the Qingxi and Zhenxi tributary valleys, were analysed in the last section of Chapter 5. Deepening the question of distribution, sections 2 and 3 of this chapter also look at the typology of Type 2 cemeteries and caves. The chosen setting, visibility and accessibility of cemeteries are addressed, as well as their formation process as a series of successive interventions on a single cliff. The dimensions, shape and main components of Type 2 caves are summarized, focusing on the introduction of a type unknown in areas north of the Yangzi, the niche-like cave. Section 4 focuses on one salient trait, the recessions added to cave openings, showing how their function and visual aspect are closely related.

As established through the experimental replication of a cave in sandstone in June 2015, cave typology is no mere shape, but responds to technological and cultural choices. Typology, technology, function and design thus intersect in the definition of a

“stone-working tradition”. Following Rockwell’s suggestion, that “every object is a document that describes its own manufacture”,¹ rock-cut spaces are considered in the last section of this chapter following the same linear, subtractive process as sculptural works.



6.1. Surveyed cemeteries in the Qi River area and its outskirts.

6.1. Qi River dataset

6.1.1. Relevance of the Qi River as a case study

Qijiang district is remote in topographical, administrative and cultural terms. It is the southernmost district of Chongqing municipality, whose present-day population is about 30 million and is largely centred on urban areas. The district combines the function of mountainous rural margin and urban margin. Several reasons, reviewed below, have kept the Qi River out of the archaeologist’s radar. Together with the concentration of dated inscriptions, the exclusive presence of Type 2 caves and the crucial location of the Qi River in the ancient route network, this gap in scholarship motivated the choice of the Qi River as a core case study.

¹ Rockwell 1993:26.

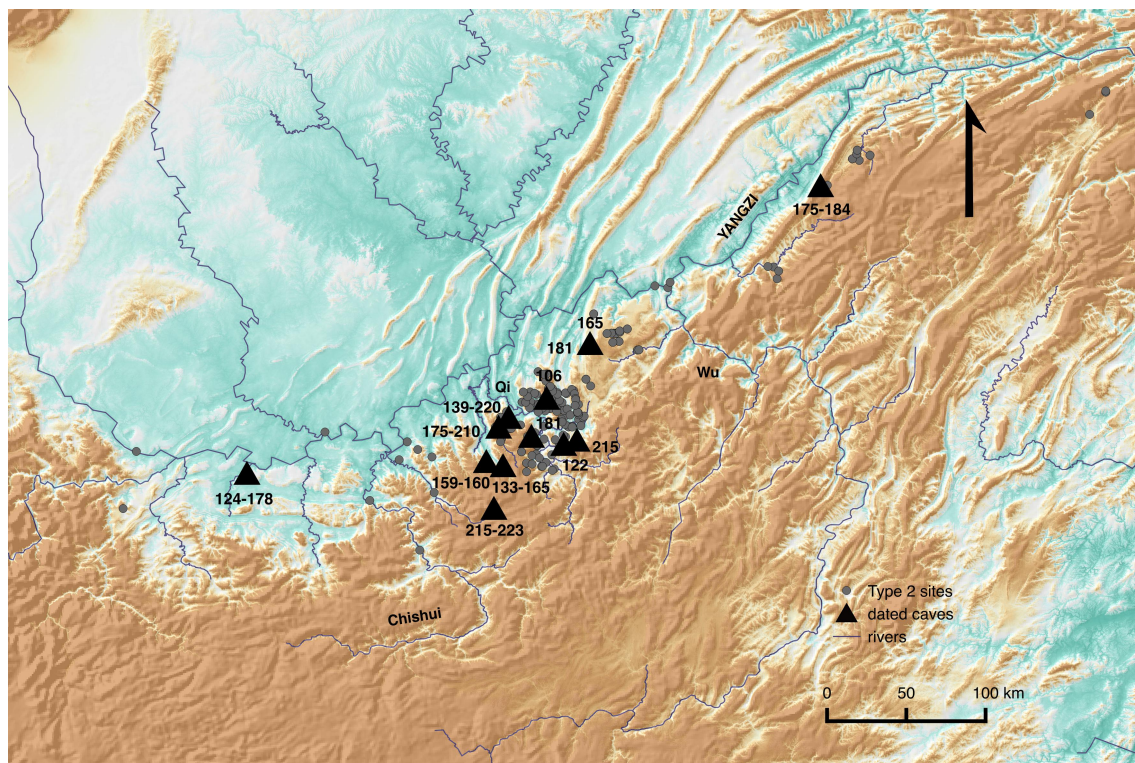
The main obstacles to conducting research in the Qi River area are the remote location of the sites and the fragmented administration of heritage. Despite the Qi River's connective role in ancient times, most districts have only been recently equipped with motor roads. Settlements have little flat terrain so that riverside cemetery sites which remained intact until today are increasingly reached by expanding towns. Another major obstacle to survey is vegetation which, with the increase of rural exodus has regained its rights over cultivated fields at the feet of the cliff faces, a few kilometres away from modern settlements. The sites located within the boundaries of Qijiang district have been little studied in contrast to sites in adjacent districts (districts of Jiangjin, Banan, Nanchuan, Fuling and Xishui county), which are included in my catchment area. However, Type 2 sites from adjacent districts can only be understood when considered from the point of view of their core area of distribution, the Qi River. As a result, they were treated as isolated examples or attributed to much later periods. In Lichuan county for example, on the western edge of Hubei province, where no other Eastern Han period monuments are known, the caves were attributed to about 500 years later. Most counties surveyed by this study have not only frequently changed name and status at each administrative reform across the centuries, but also affiliation to one province or the other. Shortcomings in the study of an area which played an essential role in connecting civilizational centres are thus to do with modern regional geopolitics.

6.1.2. The chronology of 34 inscribed caves²

As shown on the following map (**Fig.6.2**), most caves with datable inscriptions are located in the Qi River basin. The westernmost dated site is Qigedong, dated 122-178 CE, and located circa 170km west from the Qi River. The easternmost is Guanzhuangkou, dated 175-184 CE, and located circa 200km east from the Qi River. Both sites are located on a third order southern tributary of the Yangzi, in a narrow mountainous valley, and both belong to the 170s CE. The southernmost site of Sanchahe bears the latest date of the dataset: 223 CE. With Sanchahe, we step out of the Eastern Han era, into the Shu Han kingdom (221-263 CE). The remaining 31 dated

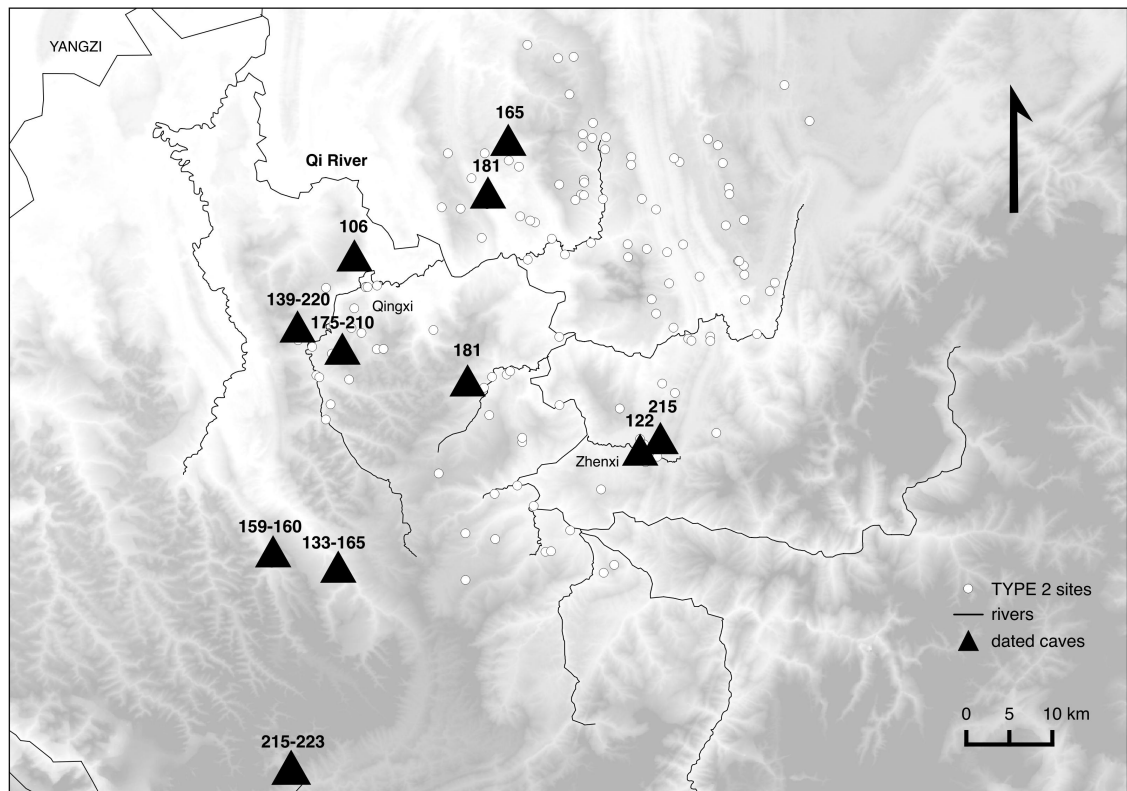
² See the appendix to Chapter 6, section 11.3.2, for a list of 34 dated caves.

caves are all located within the modern administrative boundaries of Qijiang county or its outskirts.



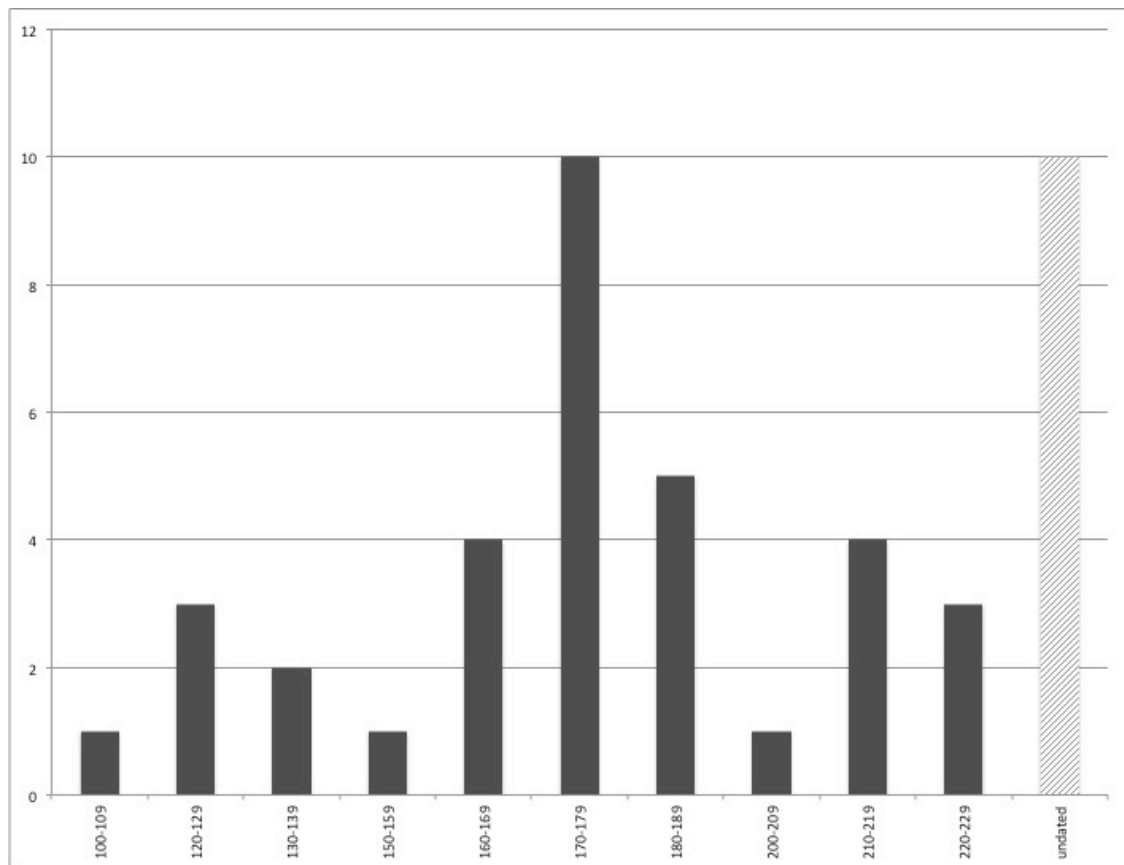
6.2. Distribution of Type 2 dated caves (numbers refer to dates CE) south of the Yangzi.

My survey included dated caves in the Simian Shan mountain range (Changgou 165 CE), which borders the Xishui River to the south, and several inscriptions in Banan and Nanchuan districts (Leipishi 133 CE), the western limit of the Qi River system. The two earliest dates are 106 CE along the Qingxi and 122 CE along the Zhenxi, two tributaries of the Qi River respectively defined in the previous chapter as a side route and an important node on routes connecting plain to highlands. These tributaries also yield two among the latest dated inscriptions. With a continuous production over several generations, both tributaries cover the whole duration of the inscribed caves' phenomenon, suggesting that the production of the caves was related to the use of the landscape for transportation purposes (**Fig.6.3**).



6.3. Distribution of Type 2 dated caves (numbers refer to dates CE) among the Qi River sites. Jiangkou (159-160) and Changgou (133-165) are in Jiangjin district at the foot of the Simian mountain range, while with Sanchahe (215-223 CE) located on the Xishui River on the other side of the Simian mountains, we already step into Guizhou province.

The sections below will show that no stark typological, stylistic or locational differences appear between dated caves and the wider dataset. These could thus correspond to the same period of stone working production. This period of production, if coinciding with the inscribed dates, would cover a little more than a hundred years between 106 and 223 CE. Not all periods are equally covered by the group of dated caves. As shown in the table below (**Fig.6.4**), most caves in the Qi area belong to the two decades between 160 and 190 CE. An impression of simultaneity is enhanced by the narrow distribution of datable inscriptions in time and by the lack of chronological progression in the cave's qualities addressed in the following sections (changes in door and cave dimensions, number of recessions, ceiling shape, and presence of depictions).



6.4. Number of dated caves by 10 year bins. About half the caves date between 170 CE and 190 CE.

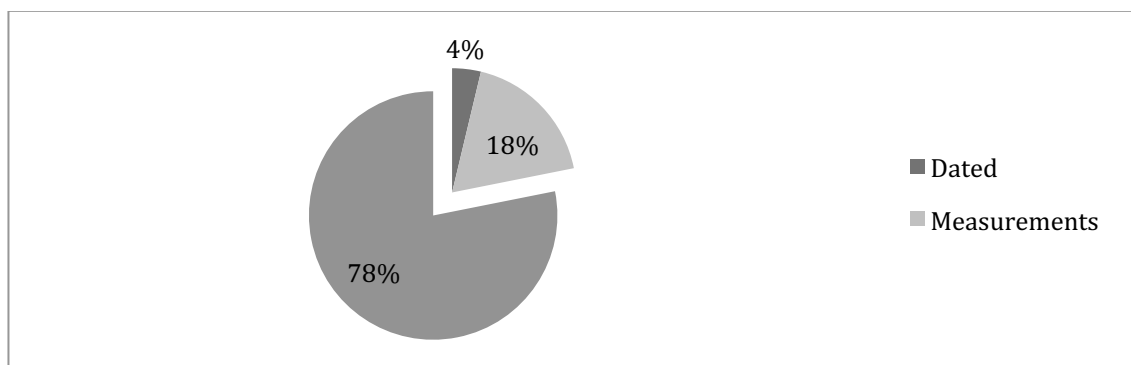
Dated inscriptions raise several questions about the cave-making practice at hand. We do not know for how long people have been making caves in the area before inscriptions were in use. We also do not know for how long caves kept being used and produced after the inscriptions were made. We are left to wonder whether inscriptions were more widely used on tombs in the decade 170-190 CE, or if more caves were built in that period. This question will be reconsidered when analysing a wider pool of inscriptions in the next chapter.

From the distribution of dated caves along the Qi River, one can only tell that caves started appearing on core tributaries first and kept the tradition alive for the full period with dated inscriptions. Other tributaries seem to have caught up with the practice only mid-way through, a couple of generations after it had been introduced elsewhere. Current knowledge of burials in Shu Han times (221-263 CE) is very limited, the few known examples being rudimentary cliff tombs or cases of re-use, usually explained by a decrease in population.

6.1.3. Dated caves (34), surveyed caves (74) and known caves (199)

34 dated caves from 17 sites cover a century (3-4 human generations) of cave production along the Qi River and its tributaries. The way these caves are grouped, their shape and dimensions, as well as salient traits and carved depictions, are here considered whenever possible in a chronological perspective, in terms of frequency as well as in terms of distribution along the Qi River. As most of the 34 caves are located in the Qi River area, and this is the area I was able to survey more exhaustively, the chosen wider dataset of undated caves only covers that specific area. The 34 dated caves are thus not compared to all caves located in the 370km long section of the Yangzi and its southern tributaries, for which the level of data resolution remains insufficient.

In fact, there are total of 910 known caves from 131 cemetery sites in the Qi River area, but of these I have chosen to focus analytical attention in what follows below on the above 34 inscribed examples plus a further 74 caves in the Qi river area (from 11 sites) for which no precise dating is available but which were surveyed directly as part of this study and additional 199 caves that I did not survey directly but for which measurements and short descriptions are available in published reports from the county-level archaeological offices (**Fig.6.5**).



6.5. Proportion of dated caves and caves for which measurements are available within the wider dataset of caves in the Qi River.

In terms of data resolution, existing unpublished reports usually record ground plan measurements, the number of recessed cave openings on the site (usually of only one cave per cemetery), the number of recessed layers and their measurements, as well as the ceiling type. Comments usually mention the presence of inscriptions or depictions

on the site.³ No further classification is used in existing surveys, but based my survey results, this study proposes a number of descriptive terms for the data at hand.

6.2. Type 2 cemeteries in the Qi river area

6.2.1. Hydrological position, elevation and population estimate

The reticulated water network and mountainous landscape of the Qi river are constraints on the site distribution, as compared to low hills and vast extents of flat land. The location of a site on a particular section of a waterway (upper, middle, lower Qi River and upstream/downstream its tributaries) in terms of navigability and connection to the Yangzi is one way to contextualize the caves. Generally, the distance between rock-cut cemeteries and waterways ranges from 1 to 250m. However, only six sites among the 131 are located directly on the Qi River itself, and half of those are in fact on sections of the upper Qi River with reduced navigability. Then, 20 sites are located on direct tributaries of the Qi River, all other sites being located on second or third order tributaries, smaller waterways often reduced to lakes or dams today. This is evident in wider valleys closer to the main course of the Qi river, where cave-builders aimed for isolated locations. When higher concentrations occur, these are clustered in narrow side valleys of the Qi River.

Another way to explore relationships between sites is elevation, which is documented for all sites. The Qi River sites are located at elevations ranging between 227 and 923m (msl). Most sites are located above 400m, generally at higher altitudes than in the Sichuan Plain as Qijiang district borders the highlands of Guizhou Province and the Dalou Mountain range.

The total number of caves stated above (910) can potentially be tripled as in many sites where only one cave was reported during the last national survey in 2009, my survey showed groups of three or four caves. A rough demographical estimate, as most caves could contain one to four individuals,⁴ would be of a population of about 10,000 inhabitants for a total surface of about 3,000 sq.km (3.33 inhabitants/sq.km.).

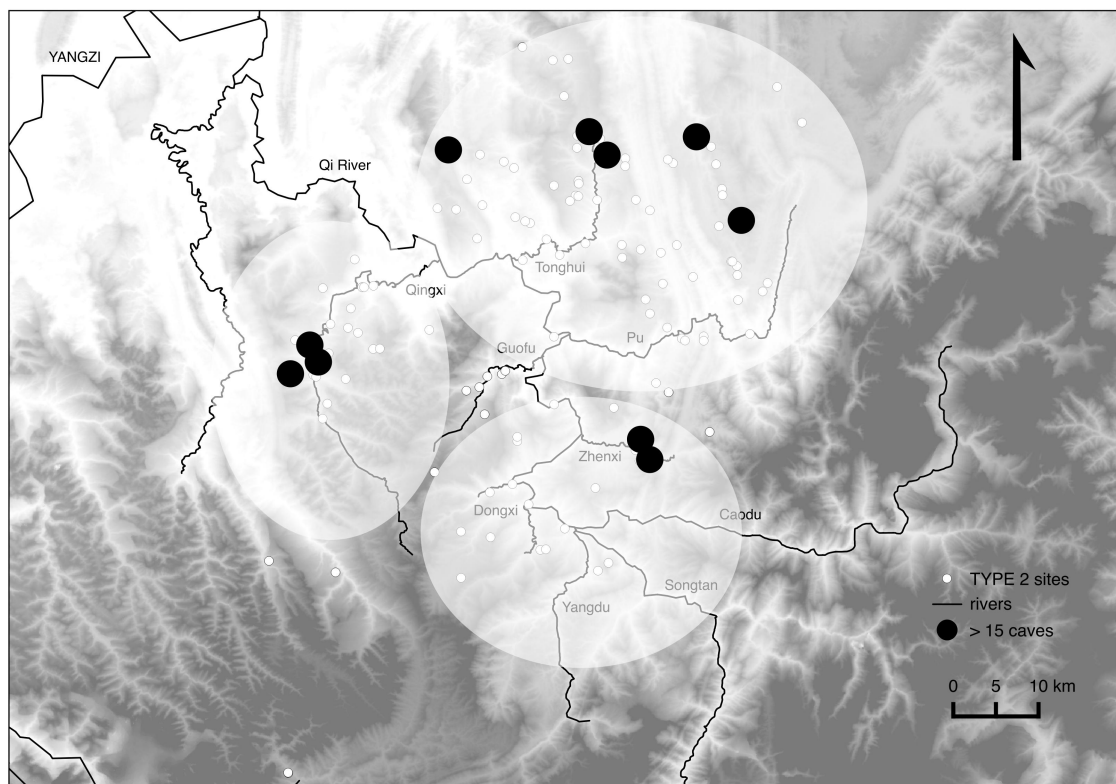
³ Liu Yuchuan 1996.

⁴ Rock-cut caves in the Sichuan basin and the Three Gorges area in which human remains have been found contain between one and ten occupants, but they are generally of bigger dimensions than Type 2 caves.

Within this surface, however, sites are concentrated along waterways rather than in the mountain ranges which separate the narrow river valleys, and even then, one has to subtract from the valleys the surface occupied by waterways and their seasonally flooded banks, as well as sloping terrain unsuitable for settlers and cultivation. This would lead us to a demographical estimate located somewhere between the population density on the Qingxi (13 inhabitants/sq.km.) and Zhenxi (100 inhabitants/sq.km.) tributaries.

6.2.2. Cemetery size and spacing

An element available for all known sites in the Qi River area is the number of caves per cemetery. Only two among the Type 2 cemeteries in the Qi River network contain more than 40 tombs, with five others counting more than 20 tombs. These bigger sites are spread among the middle Qi River mountainous enclaves, clustered in self-contained groups on alternative routes such as the Qingxi river valley, or highly concentrated in obligatory passages such as the Zhenxi river valley. These three areas of distribution of larger sites are represented below as white ovals (**Fig.6.6**).



6.6. Cemeteries with more than 15 caves in the upper, middle and lower Qi River area.

Big cemeteries are thus not the norm and when cave groups exceed five, they tend to be spaced out, 10+km apart. As we have no settlement data for the area, the relationship between settlements and cemeteries can only be speculated. If one cemetery corresponds to one settlement and the cemetery is taken as proxy for settlement size, then a hierarchy similar to that observed in the Three Gorges area is possible. Smaller cemeteries would correspond to isolated households or hamlets of a few families and medium cemeteries would correspond to villages. If one settlement corresponds to more than one cemetery, a situation observed for large sites in the Three Gorges area, several cemeteries could be part of a dispersed burial area in the outskirts of a bigger settlement.

Far ahead any other site in the Qi River network is the Xinlanqiao site, located in the Zhenxi valley, with 87 caves. Six other cemeteries less than a kilometre apart from one another are also located in the Zhenxi valley. Together with Xinlanqiao, they probably served a single agglomeration. The caves in large cemeteries such as Xinlanqiao are more spacious and tightly clustered on a single slope. The tombs in Xinlanqiao are mostly of the chamber type, with unrecessed doorframes: such uniformity reminds one of Type 1 cemeteries. Added to the probable function of the site as a portage town and an obligatory passage for those who wanted to continue upstream the Qi River towards the highland hub of Bi, this strongly suggests an agglomeration in tight acquaintance with Type 1 rock-cut sites and settlements in the plain. With some of its burial caves being of a bigger sized and equipped with corridors, Xinlanqiao is a significant bridge between Type 1 and Type 2 cemeteries. Supposing that secondary centres take over the role of major hubs in times of imperial collapse, it makes sense that the most trafficked routes had a surplus population of workers, merchants and servants, probably coming from lowland hubs, who did not resort to a radically different funerary practice.

All but two among the dated caves with inscriptions are found in cemeteries with less than 15 caves, and no bigger cemeteries bear inscriptions. That questions the chronological relationship between larger cemeteries, for which no precise date is available and whose typology is closer to the plain, and smaller sites with more individualized caves. Larger cemeteries were potentially the fact of early incomers

from the plain around the 1st or early 2nd century CE, settling in the three areas of the Qi River marked above in Fig.6.6, while the Type 2 tradition evolved in parallel between the mid-2nd and 3rd century CE.

Apart from Xinlanqiao, the scale of Type 2 cemeteries remains modest when compared to the tens of thousands of Type 1 caves in Xinjin, for example. Type 2 caves mostly come in groups of 2 to 3 or as a single isolated tomb, with no neighbour in stretches of land about 10km apart. Rather than being attached populous agglomerations, the size and distribution of caves suggests villages, hamlets, or even single-household farms using available niches in the landscape. A good example of such configuration is given by the Qingxi valley cemeteries. Here, cemeteries limited to 1 to 3 small chambers suggest household-like groupings over a few generations. The tombs along the Qingxi tributary are ornate, and they are spectacularly staged. They really are a striking expression of Type 2 caves, of what people in sparse settlements strongly connected to their own land and waters would produce. The Qingxi valley cemeteries are not monumental, but their presence is all-pervasive, adjusted to the scale of the landscape and occupying the whole space of the floodable banks and riverine cliffs. If compared to isolated elite tombs in the Sichuan basin, of course, they are of much simpler craftsmanship. In the basin, complex tombs necessitated the collaboration of at least three craftsmen: the stonemasons, the image makers and the epigraphers. What seems to make the distinctiveness of a tradition south of the Yangzi is not complex workmanship or a major inventiveness in the repertoire of three dimensional rock-cut shapes. In Type 2 cemeteries such as in the Qingxi valley, the cave builders' effort is put on the caves' impact on the landscape, with recessed doorframes acting less as a technological achievement than as an efficacious device to attract visual attention. The cave patrons most probably inhabited the plateaus overlooking the narrow river valley, where they showcased their presence. At this point, it is useful to remind ourselves that although the Qingxi tributary could function as a connection between two secondary routes (the Qi River and the Xishui River), its deep-cut sinuous course and seasonal waters is more of a potentially dangerous back-alley to the traveller than a route to stroll around. The flamboyant identities expressed in the cemeteries lined along the way only add to the picture of a stronghold, perhaps marking claims on the land around, such as land owning, hunting or fishing rights.

In the Zhenxi valley, a wide and flat plain well-connected to both water and land routes, and in the Qingxi river valley, a meandering deep-cut canyon parallel to straighter fluvial routes, the size of cemeteries and caves and their dispersal suggest different types of settlers.

6.2.3. Visibility and accessibility

In Baishulin, on the Qingxi River, four dated inscriptions attached to three adjacent caves cover a 45-year-long period (165 CE; 172-178 CE; 183 CE; 210 CE),⁵ demonstrating a consistency in the choice of a location. The site is situated on a narrow outcrop, inside the bend of a spectacular meander of the Qingxi River (**Fig.6.7**).



6.7. The Baishulin site, inside the bend of a meander of the Qingxi River. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. 141-210 CE.

The visibility of the caves, apart from their location in wide open meanders, is largely due to their height from ground (5 to 10m). On the chosen portion of cliff or boulder, most caves are raised up from the ground. This reduces the accessibility of the caves, prevents them to be reached by flooding, and enhances their visibility. Survey has shown, however, that the caves are in fact often placed in points of the cliffs where narrow cornices or neighbouring caves ease access to the building site. The experiment reported in section 5 of this chapter showed that a 15-20cm wide cornice is enough to start the excavation work, until excavators can stand on the surface they create at the

⁵ Table A1 to A6.

threshold of the cave opening. Accessibility thus seems less crucial than the visual effect provided by height.

Visibility can be considered both in terms of selecting a spot to be viewed from the widest possible area, but also in terms of choosing specific spots to be seen from. In Toraja for example, ancestors' effigies placed on cliff balconies attached to the caves, overlook the village or a specific origin house (**Fig.6.8 and 6.9**).⁶



6.8. View from Baishulin to the river meander. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality.

6.9. Cliff alternating burial caves and niches with effigies of the dead at Lema. Tana Toraja, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Early 20th century. Source: Kis-Jovak 1988:60.

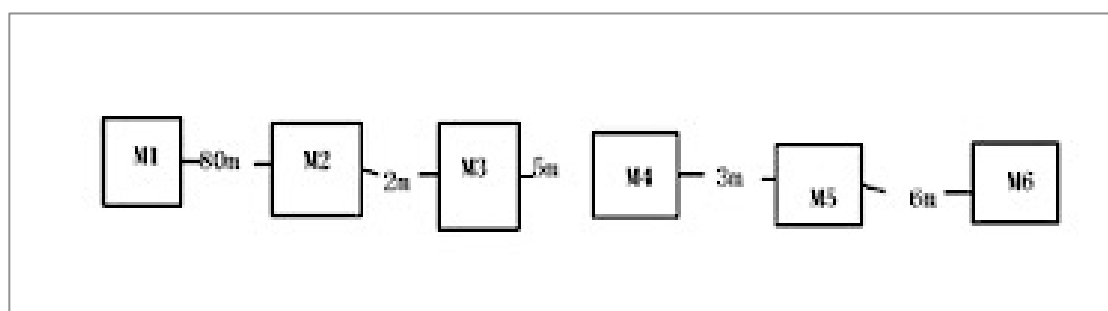
The height of Type 2 caves from the ground level differentiates them from Type 1 rock-cut burials elsewhere in Sichuan and the Three Gorges. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the sloping quality of terrain chosen to implant tombs in Eastern Han times necessitates a trench leading to the burial chambers, cut in the hillsides. Type 2 caves are not cut in sloping hillsides, but directly into vertical cliffs, the chamber opening lacking the threshold usually found in rock-cut tombs. Only at 313m of elevation above the plain of the lower Qi River, and less than 30km from the Yangzi River main course, is a tomb with rock-cut trench reported in Yazitang. Another place where a couple of tombs with trenches are encountered is in the large cemetery of Xinlianqiao. Both locations suggest affinities with lowland traditions.

⁶ "Each cliff grave (*liang*) is connected to a particular origin house and is used over generations". Waterson 1995:204.

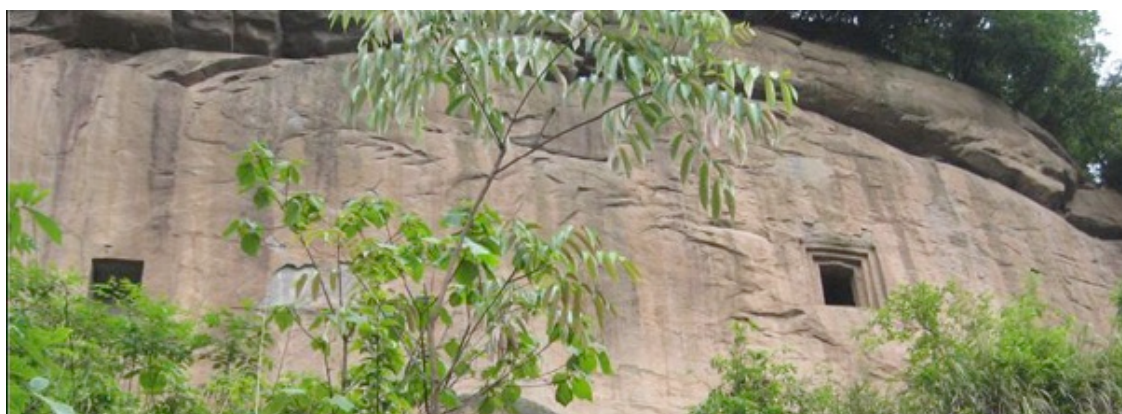
A third element enhancing visibility and encountered in the bulk of Type 2 caves, are the deep recessions added to cave openings, discussed below in section 6.4.

6.2.4. Distance and between caves and formation process of cemeteries

Looking at the total dataset for the Qi river sites does not show regularity in the way caves are spaced within a single group. Survey showed that the grouping of caves reported by official surveys is subjective, so we should anticipate missing examples. Single sites can be aggregates (群 in the reports) of smaller groups (组 in the reports). Cemeteries between 80m to a couple of km from one another are, to judge from the survey, at risk of having been grouped together as a single site for modern heritage administration reasons (**Fig.6.10**). There is no rule for how big should the catchment zone be around a single group, or when its radius becomes sufficient to differentiate between “unrelated” groups. Qikongzi-fulinA and QikongziB (139 CE) for example, are about one kilometre apart on the same side of the Fulin River. They are both of comparable sizes (10 and 8 tombs), with at least one tomb featuring a triple-recessed door. QikongziC, a smaller group of only two caves a couple of kilometres away, has a four-layered door. The two caves in QikongziC are spaced out about 15m for no apparent reason, as the quality of the stone is consistent (**Fig.6.11**).

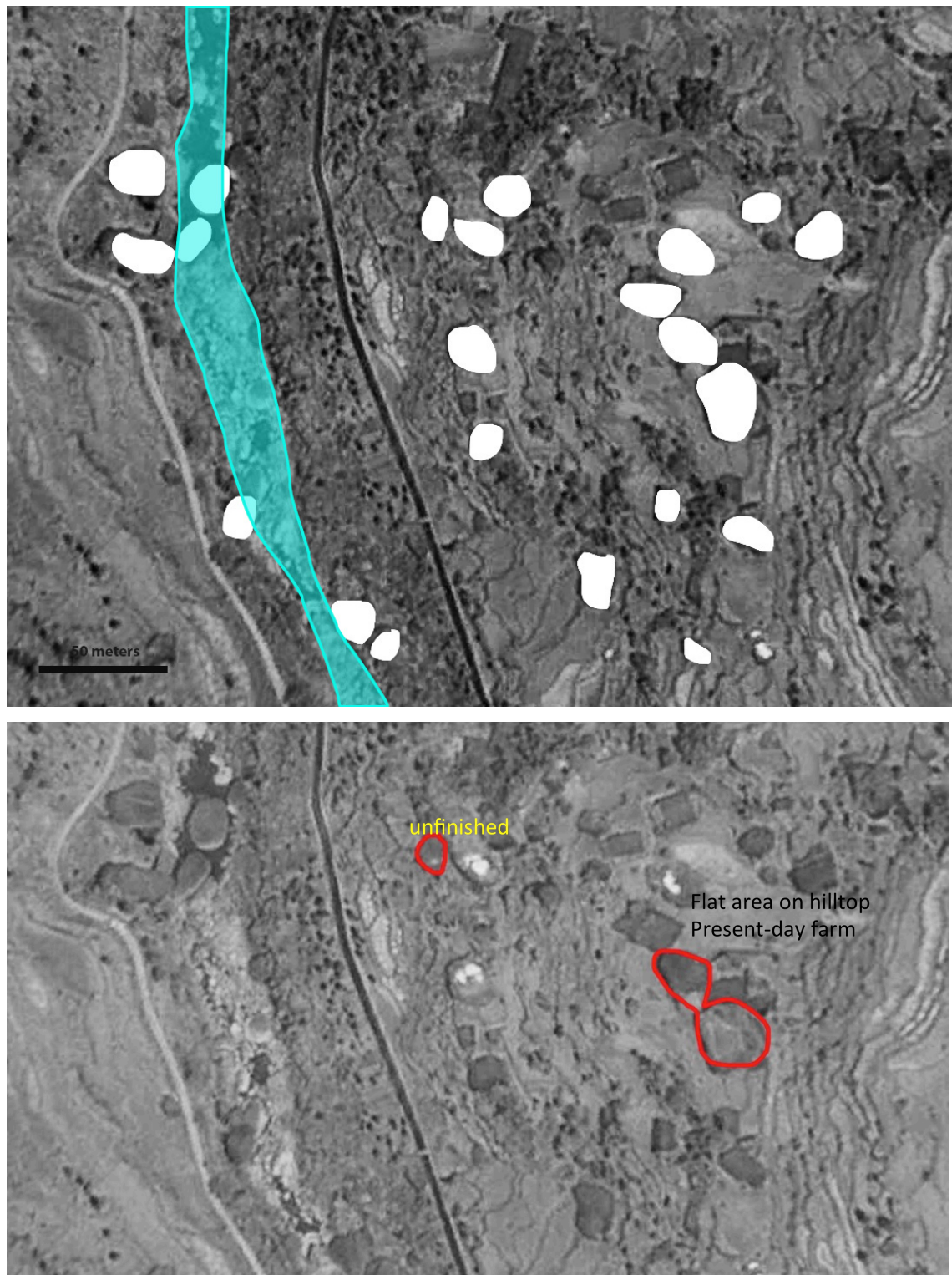


6.10. Distance between tombs within the same site. Source: courtesy of Qijiang district archaeological office 2009.



6.11. Distance between caves in QikongziC. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality.

Sizeable exposed sandstone outcrops, be it cliffs or boulders, are commonly encountered along waterways. Not all potential sites have been turned into cemeteries. Among the sandstone boulders available in Tonggengzi for example, the cave-builders only considered three locations, among which two only have attempted doors left unfinished, the middle boulder having ultimately been selected to carve three caves in (Fig.6.12).



6.12. Aerial View of Tonggengzi site showing the available boulders and the chosen ones. The blue area on the first view marks the bed of a seasonal stream. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. Source: 28°52'32.42"N and 106°27'18.93"E. Google Earth. 2017. last date of access August 25, 2017.

The Tonggengzi site has four finished caves for three unfinished attempts, and two niche-like caves for two chamber-like caves. Three among the caves are facing west, towards the river, with one of them facing south, towards the pointed peak. The selected boulders are slightly higher than the neighbouring ones, and the caves face an open space with strong scenic qualities: a monumental cliff on the background, and a triangular pointed peak of the left (**Fig.6.13**).



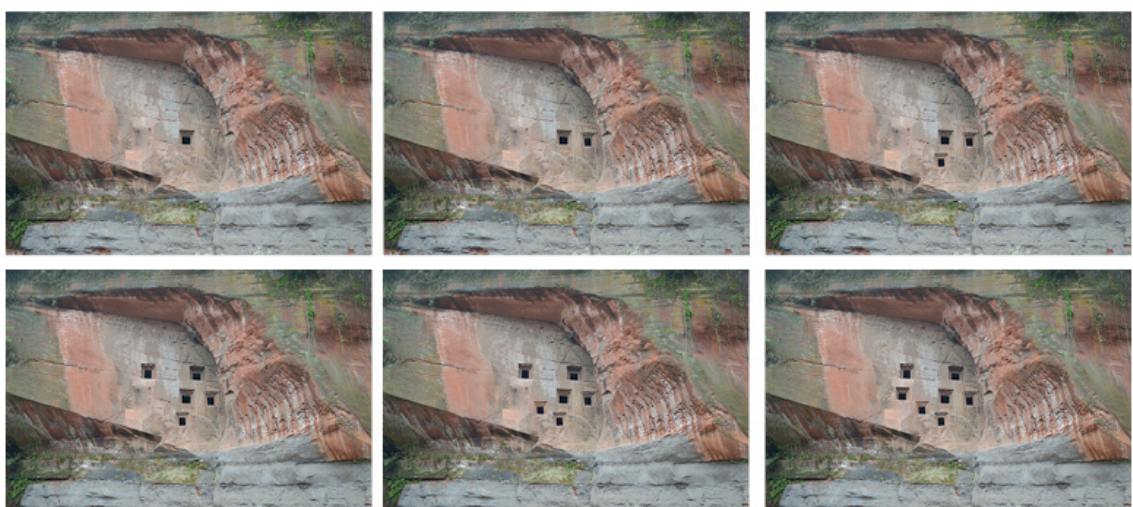
6.13. Landscape in Tonggengzi. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality.

As we can see, spacing between cave groups can seldom be attributed to the availability of raw sandstone cliffs. Cave groups cut into the cliffs and boulders do not use all the exposed surface, and cemeteries often “split” in smaller groups. Cave-builders opportunistically picked neighbouring cliffs and boulders, forming groups of 2-3 caves distant a few dozen metres from each other. The size of such cemeteries could be related to the adjacent terrain where settling is possible or to areas of influence of settled communities. The same can be said for the presence of multiple recessed doors. Small, spaced out cemeteries show stronger intent in marking a specific

identity. One motivation for distancing would be for a group to possess its own bounded area, distinct from others.

According to dated sequences on cliffs faces, unfinished and isolated caves, the first comer chose the approximate middle of the cliff. Below, the formation process of Qigedong is retraced based on seven dated inscriptions covering a 56 years-long period (122 to 178 CE), the equivalent of two or three generations (**Fig.6.14**).⁷

- A) The first cave has two rock-cut coffins inside, thus at least two occupants.
- B) A second cave is aligned on the right of the first one, forming a first row, without rock-cut coffin and undecorated, dated 122-125 CE.
- C) A third cave is added below this first row, heavily decorated but with no rock-cut coffin. Another cave planned next to it, on its right too, would have formed a second row, but is not finished. The inscription carved on the unfinished door outline is dated November 178 CE.
- D) Next, two caves with similar decorations and both with two rock-cut coffins are added, aligned above the first row, forming a third row. A third cave was planned on this row, in-between these two, but remained unfinished.
- E) A cave is added in between rows 1 and 2, not aligned to any other, dated December 178.
- F) Finally, a 7th cave was added in between rows 1 and 2, not really aligned to any other.



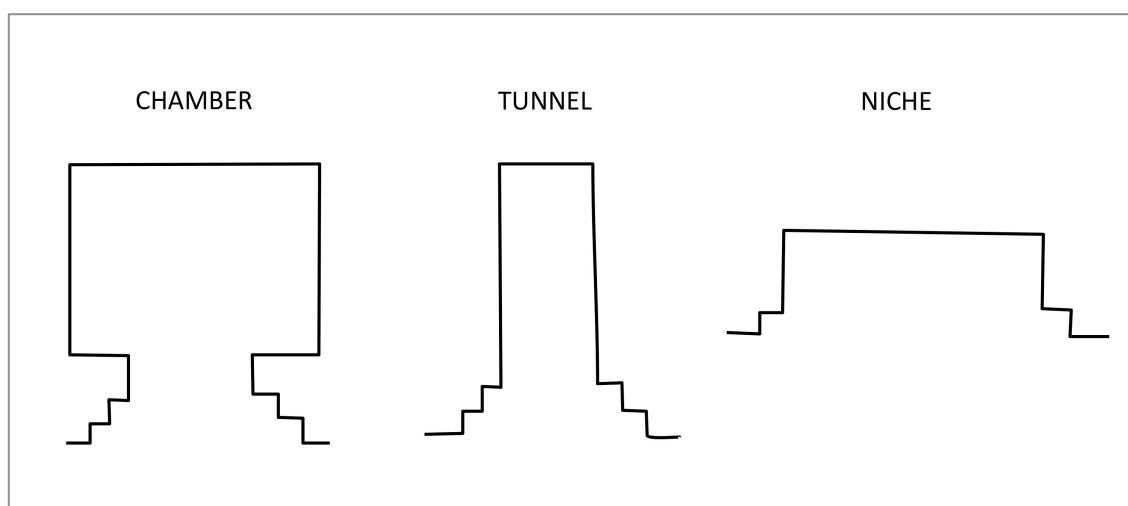
6.14. Formation process of a cave group in Qigedong, based on dated inscriptions next to cave openings. A – B – C – D – E – F. Changning county, Sichuan province.

⁷ Table A23 to A35 in the appendix to Chapter 7: Inscriptions Table.

The very last addition (8th cave) is not on the same cliff, but on the mountain slope next to the seven other caves (not shown in Fig.6.14). The choice of such an outsider location, less easily accessible, more readily covered by vegetation and exposed to rain for the last cave, raises questions as to whether it is attributable to a different group.

6.3. Type 2 cave typology

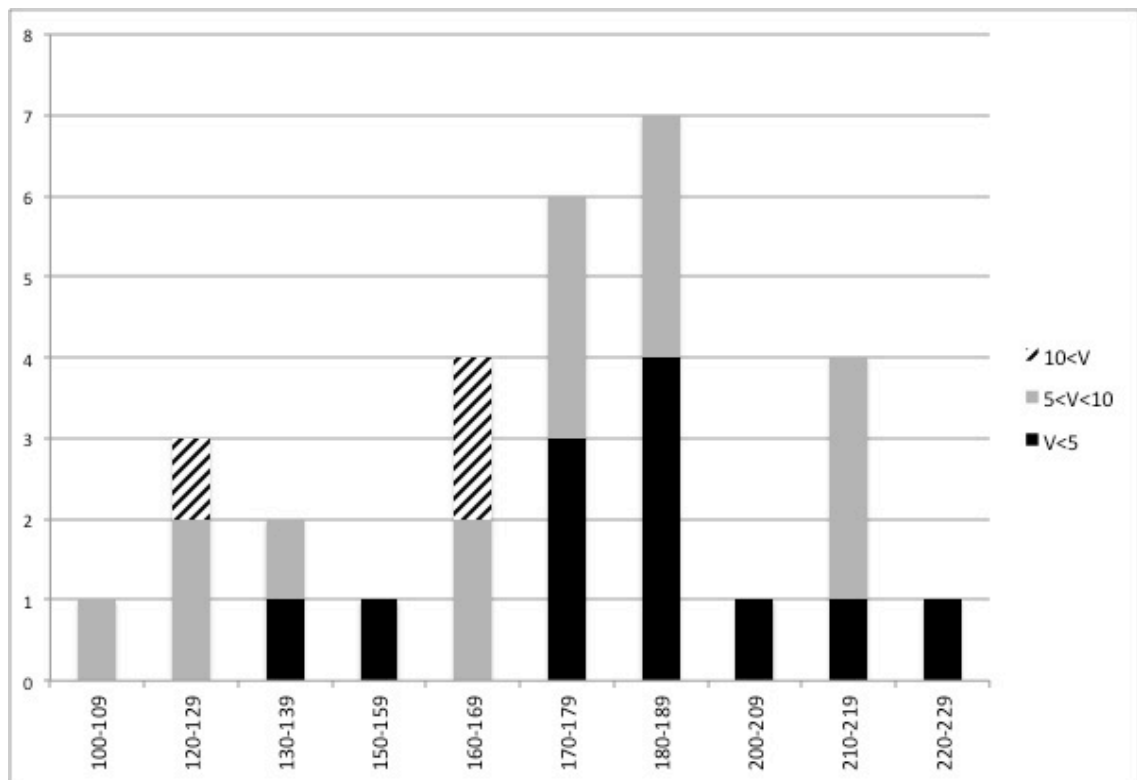
This section deals with cave measurements, where they are systematically reported in the national archaeological survey data. Type 2 caves are generally of smaller dimensions than Type 1 caves. No typology based on the shape and measurements of the burial is given in reports and innovative types of caves have been overlooked. Mixed cave typology also distinguishes Type 2 cemeteries from cemeteries in the Sichuan basin and Yangzi gorges. This study identifies three sub-types of caves, among which the last two are specific to the Type 2 caves: small-sized chambers, shallow niche-like caves and narrow tunnel-like caves (**Fig.6.15**).



6.15. Three types of caves in Type 2 cemeteries.

6.3.1. Volume of caves

The volume of 34 dated caves varies between 1.6 and 11.5m³. The variation in cave volume among the wider dataset of non-dated caves is much wider, ranging between 0.4 and 23.5m³ (the latter being Heba A). Most caves earlier than the 170s CE, are greater than 5m³, some of them reaching 10m³. Bigger caves are not encountered after 170 CE, when smaller caves less than 5m³ become the majority (**Fig.6.16**).



6.16. Volume of dated caves in cubic metres. In black are caves with a volume less than 5m^3 , in grey are those between 5 and 10m^3 , the striped areas showing the caves greater than 10m^3 .

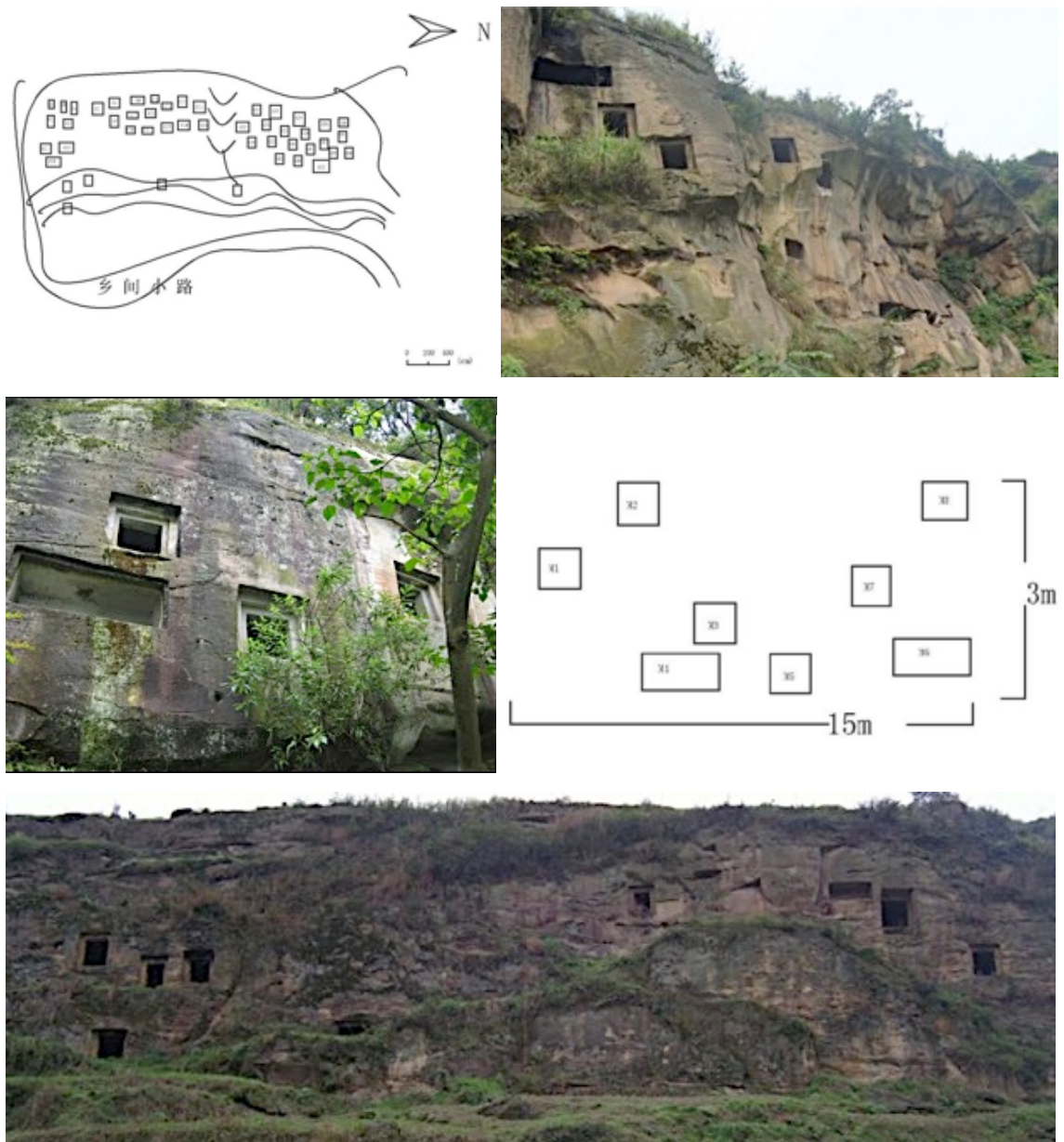
As this decrease in volume seems to coincide with an increase in the number of caves produced, individual burials might have prevailed on previous collective spaces for the dead or the trend might indicate increased equality amongst cave-builders. Also, tunnel-like caves and niche-like caves did not seem to appear before 165 CE, and both types are almost half the volume of a small-sized chamber. When cave-making became a popular option for burial in the region, with a broader pool of users, people diversified the shape of caves and may have thought of more economical types in terms of time, skill and effort invested.

The caves themselves are a witness to the amount of effort invested in their production. As shown by our experiment in replicating a cave reported in section 5 below, the amount of work for two masons to carve a one cubic metre cave with a three-layers recessed door is five days, with 8 to 9 hours work per day, thus about 45 hours. 80% of the Qi River caves are less than 7m^3 in volume, thus equivalent to 315 hours, about 40 full days of work. Distributed over a few months' period, these correspond roughly to one season. Despite the visual impact of Type 2 funerary landscapes, it seems that they required nothing more than a seasonal investment over

two or three generations.

6.3.2. Mixed cave typology

Niches, tunnels and chambers are often found within the same cave group, in varying proportions. From the general line drawing and photographic view available in the national archaeological survey data, one can at least distinguish the entrances to niche-like caves, that are rectangular and wider from side to side than bottom to top, from square entrances that belong to either tunnel or chamber type (**Fig.6.17**). Among the 59 sites for which the dimensions of each cave entrance is known (in total 267 caves), 231 caves are either of the tunnel or chamber type and 33 of the niche type.



6.17. From top to bottom: Jiepai (big sized cemetery), Guanyinyan, and Songlinggan. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. Source: courtesy of Qijiang district archaeological office 2009.

Niche-like caves are cut parallel to the cliff face. They are shallow in depth (about 60-70cm) but they extend horizontally to a length sufficient to lay a human body in (150-180cm). The niche has a horizontal, rectangular opening which is rarely enhanced by more than one single recessed layer. Because they remain shallow and have a wide opening, niche-like caves can be cut in a more comfortable position for the mason than chambers or tunnel-like caves, and they require less planning. There is seldom space for more than one or two bodies in the narrow spaces, positioned parallel to the cliff face, as in the case of wooden coffins secured on cliffs. **(Fig.6.18).**



6.18. Line-carved ceiling of a niche-like cave in Qikongzi. Lichuan county, Hubei province.

This alternative way of placing the body (orientation, lack of closure, little to no artefacts but a few body ornaments) seems remote from Eastern Han funerary ideology. This has induced local officers to attribute all niches to later periods (Tang, Song), and fit them in the wider category of “cliff burials” rather than “Han cliff tombs”. Indeed, niche-like caves are systematically present in later graveyards (7th century CE onwards), and no equivalent to the niche and tunnel-type caves were found in Type 1 cemeteries. Only six occurrences of niche-like caves have been reported in the Qi River, because of their simpler and rougher execution, niches are often not considered worthy of measurement or even mention in official reports.⁸ During survey, this study thus had to include sites that had been misattributed to later periods, as well as pay attention to the potential presence of unrecorded niches in Han period cemeteries.

⁸ For this reason, no reliable spatial distribution of niches can be given here. Comparably heavy concentrations of niches seem to be found along the Qingxi River (own survey: in 4 sites out of 20).

A major achievement of my survey has been to prove that several niches of Eastern Han date had been misattributed to later periods. The earliest niche explicitly dated to the Eastern Han period surveyed by this study in Changgou, is datable to the years 160-169 CE. A chamber type cave is found right next to it and bears an inscription dated 159 CE (**Fig.6.19**). From this single example, we can tell that the niches were already in use in Eastern Han times concurrently with other cave types. Moreover, one of the caves in Sanchahe, bearing a short undated inscription and carvings, belongs to the same group as an inscribed chamber-like cave dated 223 CE. The two inscriptions are stylistically similar, suggesting that the niche and chamber type caves are contemporaneous.



6.19. Contemporaneous chamber (159 CE; 215cm deep and 147cm wide) and niche (160-169 CE; 80cm deep and 170cm wide) in Changgou. Jiangjin district, Chongqing municipality.

Niches are often present in smaller proportion, as compared to chamber or tunnel types, among the caves of a single cemetery. They account for 20% of the caves in Qikongzi Heba, and 25% in Guanyinyan. More rarely do they stand for 50% of the cemetery, such in Laodongyan. In Laodongyan, the treatment of doorframes on chamber-like caves and niche-like caves is similar, as if the two were “paired” (**Fig.6.20**).



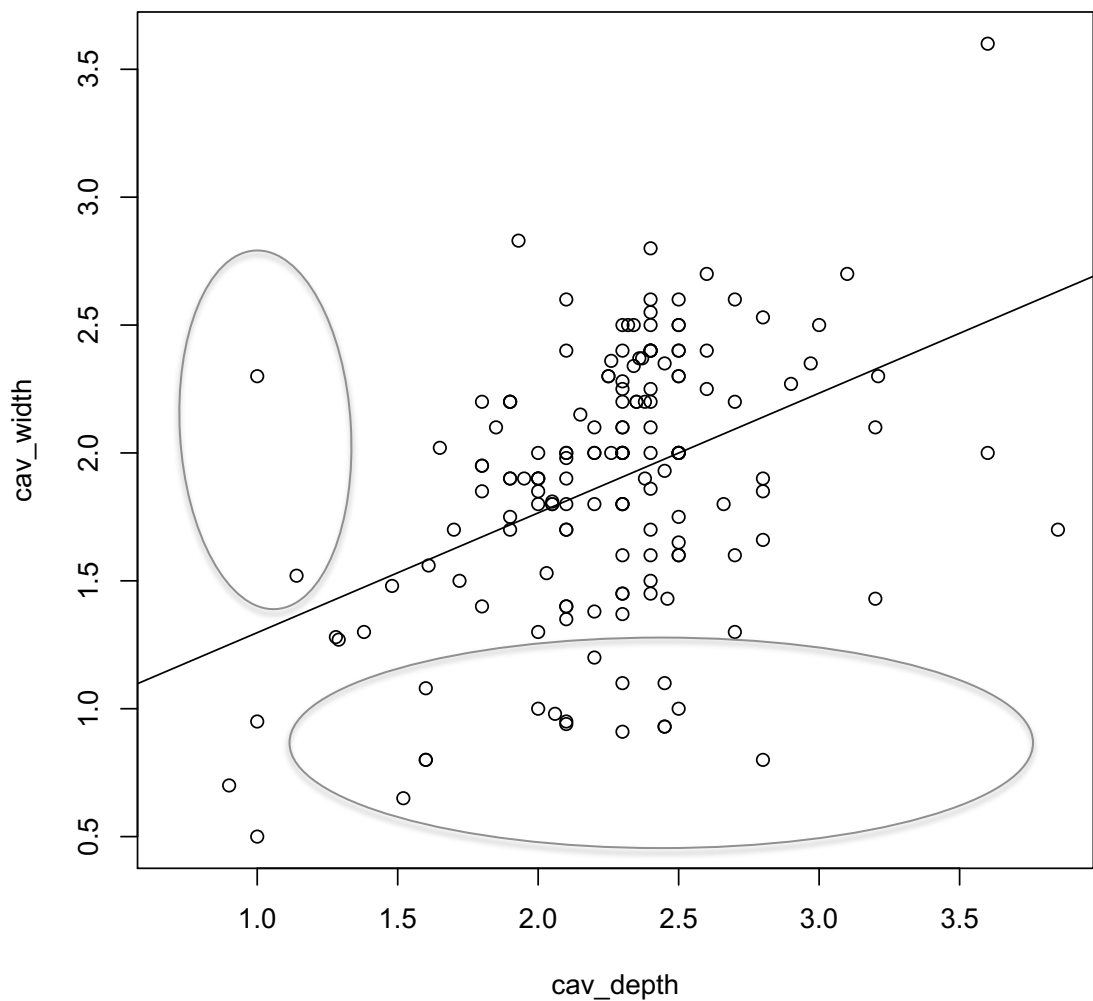
6.20. Sandstone boulder in Laodongyan. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality.

Tunnel-like caves are cut orthogonal to the cliff face, proceeding deeper than 2m into the rock. They remain narrow (70-90 cm) with a low ceiling, usually triangular or flat. The tunnel has a square opening whose doorframe is often enhanced by the addition of two or three recessed layers. Although of smaller dimensions, this type is not less demanding than the chamber-like cave in terms of effort. Being as deep, and much narrower, it requires one worker to work alone and extract the material little by little instead of in big chunks as seen in chambers. In contrast to niche-like caves, caves of the tunnel type are often carefully finished and bear inscriptions and depictions. Four caves of the tunnel type are datable to the 2nd century CE by epigraphic inscriptions in Baishulin (175 CE and 210 CE) and Guanzguangkou (175 CE and 184 CE).

Chamber-like caves are usually square or rectangular in ground plan. Here, the cave opening is square and smaller than the chamber. The doorframe can be thick and decorated. The bodies could be placed in any position, and the space can usually hold more than two bodies. This is the closest type to Type 1 caves, although it is not furnished with rock-cut stoves evoking the domestic space and coffins except for one occurrence, in Miaoziding. The earliest dated cave in Yanfenggou (106 CE) is of the chamber type, along with other early dated caves: Daokaimen (122 CE), Shihutou (122

CE), Qigedong (122-125 CE), and Leipishi (133 CE). The 223 CE chamber type cave in Sanchahe shows that chamber-like caves are still carved in the end of our epigraphic time frame. Chambers have the wider temporal distribution and are the most commonly encountered.

In some cases, the caves are hard to fit into any of the three categories described above: square chambers are found with no marked cave opening, or shallow caves almost as high as they are wide. In the scatter plot below, tunnels and niches appear as outliers (**Fig.6.21**).



6.21. Relation between cave width and cave depth in m for 117 caves for which measurements are known in the Qi river area. Outliers are circled and correspond to wider niches and deeper tunnels.

The only cemetery featuring two dated tunnel and a dated chamber type cave is Baishulin (**Fig.6.22**). A first tunnel type cave was carved in 165 CE, and a second one in 183 CE. A 172-178 CE inscription left of the second cave is attached to a line-carved

horse figure on the cliff. A chamber type cave was then added in 210 CE, at least 17 years later. In Guanzhuangkou too, a tunnel-type cave is dated 175 CE and predates a chamber-like cave with a 184 CE inscription. Sites with dated caves, however, are too few to provide a solid chronological relation between cave types.



6.22. Dated caves in Baishulin. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality.

Four types of ceilings are described in the archaeological records:⁹ flat, triangular, vault and curved. Occasionally, pyramid-shaped ceilings are found. Flat ceilings are the most common, as they are found in all three cave types. Triangular ceilings are only encountered in tunnel-like chambers, with a central ridge enhancing the longitudinal direction of the cave. Vaults and domes better fit the centred volume of the chamber, and recall the brick-built vaults of Eastern Han burials in brick chambers. In the 34 dated caves sample, flat ceilings are mostly found between 160 and 190 CE, the decades where possibly more caves were being produced in the area, and they could be the sign of a more standardized production. Coarsely cut curved ceilings are dated early in the 130s CE or later in the 220s CE. Triangular and vaulted ceilings are found evenly throughout the time period.

To summarise, the period between 160 and 190 CE sees a decrease in the size of the caves, a diversified typology of caves and the systematic use of regularly shaped flat ceilings.

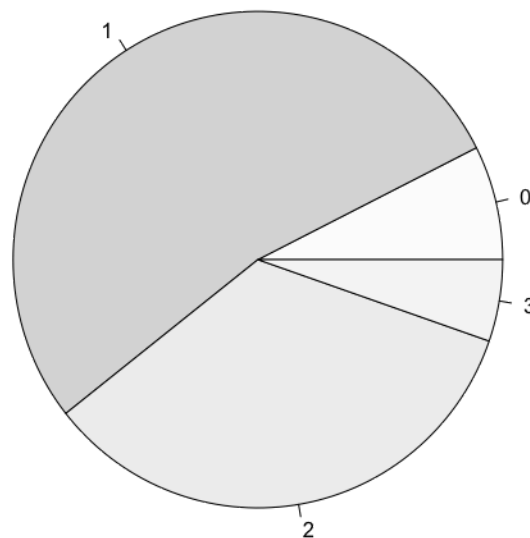
⁹ Archaeological Atlas by Province 2002-2009 and 3rd National Archeological Survey unpublished data 2009.

6.4. Adding recessions to cave openings¹⁰

The last types of measurements which are steadily reported are the numbers of layers and dimensions of recessed doors. Recessed doors are the only stylistic marker featured in all sites – as compared to inscriptions, depictions or dressing patterns. It is also the most apparent visual signal given by the caves to the outside viewer, as other ornaments are mostly line-carved, with little sculptural effect and barely detectable when standing at the foot of the cliffs. Finally, as shown below, recessed doors provide an important link between questions of technology and design.

6.4.1. Frequency of recessions added to cave openings

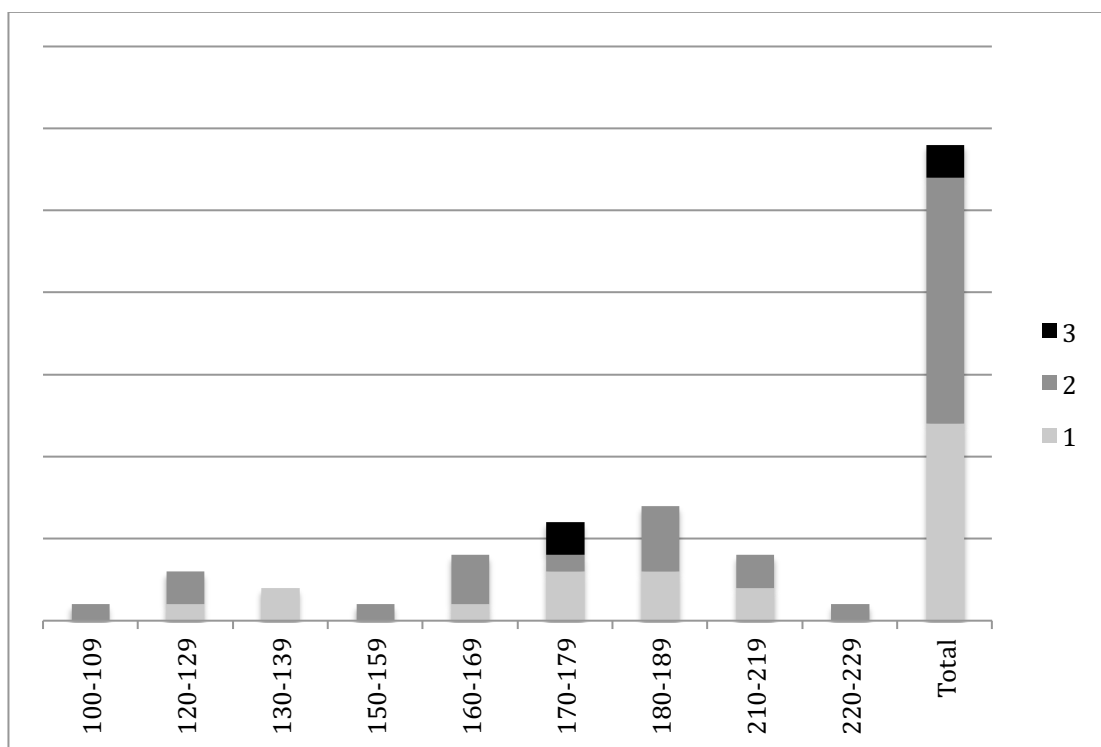
Type 2 cave doorframes feature up to three recessions. The following pie chart shows the proportion of caves with recessed, double-recessed and triple-recessed openings, as compared to cave openings that are left unrecessed (**Fig.6.23**). With less than 10% of known cave openings being left unrecessed, recessed cave openings are the norm. More than half of the cave openings possess a single recession, closely followed in frequency by double-layered cave openings. Triple-recessed cave openings are less common, being only reported in nine sites.



6.23. Recessed openings for 299 caves for which the number of recessions is known. (0) stands for unrecessed cave openings, (1) for cave openings with a single recessions, (2) for double-layered openings and (3) for triple-recessed openings. Source: Archaeological Atlas by Province 2002-2009 and 3rd National Archaeological Survey 2009.

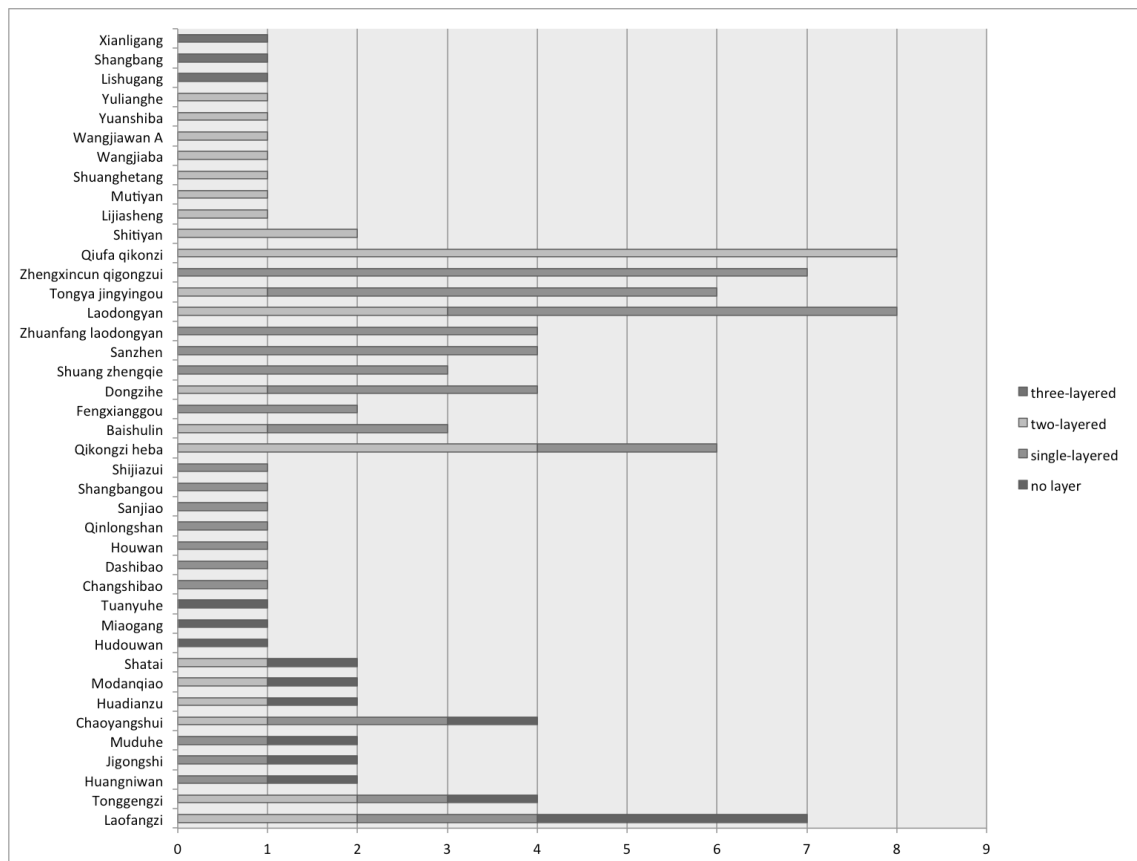
¹⁰ See tables in the appendix to Chapter 6, sections 11.3.3, 11.3.4 and 11.3.5, for measurements of double, triple and four-layered recessed doors.

In terms of temporal distribution, our 34 dated caves do not show a significant chronological evolution of the number of recessions added to cave openings. No inscribed cave opening was left unrecessed, and the only two examples of dated triple-recessed caves are in Qigedong. Both single and double-recessed caves coexist throughout the century and inscribed caves do not necessarily feature more than a single recession (**Fig.6.24**).



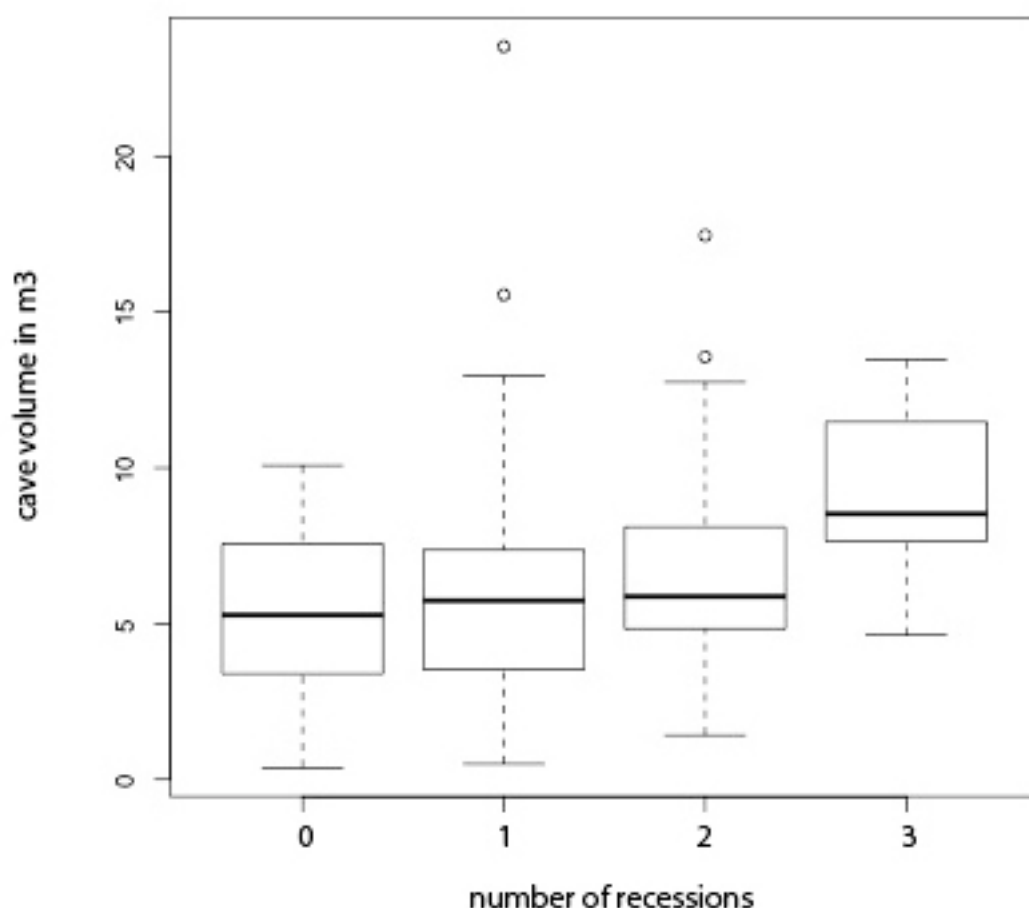
6.24. Proportion of single (1), double (2) and triple-recessed openings (3) for 34 dated caves.

Because of the supplementary step in planning and workload suggested by the addition of recessions on cave openings, as well as the visual impact achieved, one would think of it as a mark of status or at least, of distinction. The following chart shows the proportion of each type of cave opening, from unrecessed to triple-recessed, for the 41 cemeteries in which all caves are described in the 3rd national archaeological survey data for Qijiang district (**Fig.6.25**). In at least seven sites, all caves have the same number of recessions. Single recessed openings, which seem to be the norm as for the totality of the sample, are not present in all sites. In fact, only two sites display more than two types of openings, in a continuous progression from unrecessed to double-recessed. Finally, doorframes of most isolated caves have single or double recessions, and the triple-recessed openings are all found in isolated caves.



6.25. Proportion of unrecused, single, double and triple recessed doors for 41 cemeteries for which all door shapes are known. Source: 3rd National Archaeological Survey in Qijiang district 2009.

From the observations above, the number of recessions added to doorframes does not appear necessarily as an indicator of hierarchy within single cemeteries. Still, the builders seem to have invested more effort in caves which openings are triple-recessed, since those caves' volume is generally a few cubic metres greater than caves with unrecused to double-recessed openings (**Fig.6.26**). A potential explanation for having larger tombs, which can accommodate more bodies, with more recessions would be the tomb being re-used and a recess added each time. This hypothesis coincides with observations made in the next subsections as to how the carving of recessed doors can be made at any point of the cutting sequence of a cave.



6.26. Volume of unrecessed, recessed, double-recessed and triple-recessed caves in cubic metres for 274 caves for which number of recessions and cave volume are known. The circles are outliers and the lines indicate the mean cave volume for each type of cave opening. Source: Archaeological Atlas by Province 2002-2009 and 3rd National Archaeological Survey 2009.

The proportions of recessed layers, their dimensions and their shape are carefully controlled, in contrast to the coarsely executed cave walls. Measurements for 36 doorframes with two layers, and for 17 doorframes with three layers were collected for this study, and show a certain uniformity in dimensions. Only one among the nine four-layered recessed doorframes was measured in Lishugang, and partial data is available for the other eight examples (**Fig.6.27**).

Recessed doors obviously distinguish the caves south of the Yangzi from their Type 1 homologues, but they also create distinctions within Type 2 cemeteries (as evidenced by the higher concentration of triple recessed doors along the Qingxi tributary), and occasionally among the caves of a single Type 2 cemetery (as the co-existence of single, double or triple recessed doors seems to indicate).



layer	width	height
inner	0.8	0.81
Layer 1	0.95	0.93
Layer 2	0.96	0.95
Layer 3	1.11	0.96
Layer 4	1.3	1.17



6.27. Examples of 4-layered recessed doorframes in Lishugang and Xianligang M1. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. Source: courtesy of Qijiang district archaeological office 2009.

6.4.2. Function behind the norm: Single recession

We can think of functional reasons for adding a single recession to cave openings. As we will see below, single recessions are often planned within the carving sequence of a cave. Doorframes with a single step, showing no trace of sealing device, suggest that the spaces were left open or that rectangular slabs of smaller dimensions, possibly in some perishable material of which we have no trace left, would be made to fit in there, like in Toraja rock tombs (**Fig.6.28**). Only isolated examples feature holes or ridges in doorframes that overcut existing engravings, and are most probably evidence

of re-use (**Fig.6.29**). This is a fundamental difference between Type 2 and Type 1 caves, as the latter are sealed by heavy stone slabs.



6.28. Rock tomb sealed by a wooden cover. Tana Toraja, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Early 20th century. Source: Kis-Jovak 1988:61.

6.29. Re-used cave in Chaoyang with added holes for sealing. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality.

Another functional addition to cave openings is a chiselled ridge found on cave lintels, like in Qigongzui (**Fig.6.30**). Such ridges, just like a gutter or drip line, aim at avoiding surface run-off and the damaging effects of direct washing by rain on sandstone. The ridges can also turn into decorative features, also seen in Qigongzui (**Fig.6.31**). The effect of rain water deposits is visible around the relief lintel, but the semi-circular shape is carved with two low relief disks evoking the sun and moon.



6.30. Gutter above cave no.6 Qigongzui, Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. Circa 179-181 CE.

6.31. Decorated lintel above cave no.4. Qigongzui, Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. 181 CE.

6.4.3. Style or indicator of standardized practice: Multiple recessions

If the stonemasons wished to create more layers, they could enlarge the original door outline without modifying the existing cavity. This was indeed the case, judging by unfinished door outlines in Qigedong, which are smaller than the finished stepped doors. Recessions run on the sides and lintel of the cave opening, but thresholds feature maximum one step, like in Shuanghetang (**Fig.6.32**).



6.32. Stepped door of cave no.1. in Shuanghetang. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. 181 CE.

Multiple recessions can be seen as an “addition” because they are not a necessary step in the cutting sequence of a cave. They are added to a standard cave any time after the completion of the cave. Multiplying recessed layers and decorating them with geometric patterns or depictions are often the only ways by which one cave is

differentiated from the next. Occurrences where recessed layers are cut before the cave itself are rare (**Fig.6.33**).¹¹



6.33. Unfinished cave with triple-recessed door in Guling Qinlongshan. Banan district, Chongqing municipality.

In terms of planning, to add several layers to the doorframe of a cave:

- For a tunnel: no specific planning is needed.
- For a niche: the niche should not be too shallow, else the layering could reach the back wall of the cave. This might explain why niches often have only one layer.
- For a chamber, the front wall of the chamber should be thick enough to accommodate the layers.

¹¹ I have only found three examples during survey : in Yongjia, Bishan county, Chongqing municipality, Qishubian, Banan district, Chongqing municipaliy, and Qinlongshan, Banan district, Chongqing municipality.

6.5. Identifying a stone working tradition

Following the observations made above on cave, ceiling and doorframe typology, this section looks at sculptural production as a process involving both technological and cultural choices rather than as a result to be formally described. This approach diverges from existing studies on rock-cut sculpture in Han period Sichuan, which are reviewed below.

6.5.1. A theoretical framework for the study of Sichuanese sculpture¹²

Early 20th century authors such as Chavannes pioneered the study of early imperial Chinese sculpture.¹³ Segalen, following his teacher Chavannes, noticed the marginal status of Chinese sculpture within the hierarchy of Fine Arts in the Far East. When compared to the West, where architecture reigns over sculpture and painting, Segalen argues that East Asian art privileges “a connection with the spirit, and the forms of art that can serve as receptacle and vehicle for thought, after the fashion of writing or calligraphy”.¹⁴ As a result, Chinese architecture does not, according to Segalen, aim to conquer the third dimension but focuses its efforts on the design of ground plans, which attain the value of magical diagrams, and on the question of order and classification, which rule the activity and relationships of men.

Just as the ground plan is preferred to the building itself, rubbings are preferred to the actual engraved stone. In Chinese antiquarian studies, bronze vessels and jade are valued for their capacity to preserve characters rather than for their sole craftsmanship. In such a hierarchy, sculpture is condemned to remain at the ground level of things because of its incapacity to articulate abstract discourses. As a result, in Chinese art history and archaeology sculptured shapes are often studied as decontextualized two-dimensional images (**Fig.6.34 and Fig.6.35**).

¹² See Wei 2015 for a preliminary version of this section.

¹³ Chavannes 1893.

¹⁴ Segalen 1917:5.



6.34. Attempts at rubbing a que pillar in Qu County (渠县), Chongqing municipality. 1914. Photograph by Segalen. 13 x 18cm. Source: Photographic archive of Musée Guimet. Reproduced In Ghesquière et al. 2005:124.

6.35. An illustration after the textual description of the funerary pillar of Wang Zhizi 王稚子 in Qu county, Chongqing municipality. Source: Originally accompanying a description by Hong Kuo 洪适 (1117-1184 CE) in the *Li Shi* 隸釋 (1181 CE). This version is reproduced from Fig. 32 in Segalen 1917:123.

The classification of rock-cut reliefs for both medieval Buddhist sculpture and Eastern Han stone carvings, is mostly based on formal and iconographic features. As reviewed below in Chapter 8, engraved stones in flat relief known as “Han Pictorial Stones” were deemed worthy to be the object of literati interest, but any kind of higher relief unfit for rubbing has remained outside the reach of traditional scholarship. However, sculpture under the Han dynasty, which along with the Liang and the Tang is considered as the golden age of Chinese sculpture, was suddenly lifted from this heavy and marginalized role and became a widely used medium. Moreover, Sichuanese sculpture resisted the incorporation into “Han pictorial stones” and the intertextual sphere of rubbings, given the qualities of sandstone and its depth of relief. Han period

Sichuanese sculpture thus provides an opportunity to reconsider interpretative habits in the study of Chinese sculpture.

The quantity and quality of Sichuanese sculpture, the lack of planning of its sparse figures on open backgrounds, and its high relief, hardly matched by contemporaneous carvings found outside the Sichuan area,¹⁵ are all formal characteristics which partly derive from the technical possibilities of rock-cutting in sandstone. Part of the freedom in execution and the experimental aspect of Sichuanese sculpture is due to the specific qualities of sandstone. Sandstone is a sedimentary rock structured into easy to split horizontal beds. Unlike hard sandstones, which must be hammered at a 90° angle, Sichuanese soft sandstones are worked at a 45° angle, as if drawing. Sandstone of even consistency, which can be worked in any direction, is called “freestone”. Its surface cannot be polished because of its granular structure and it keeps a good amount of tool traces, which make it the best record of carving movements. While most marks left on final products usually belong to finishing tools,¹⁶ Sichuanese reliefs often bear traces of preliminary carving stages.

Cave burials in Southwest China allow us to revisit the above panorama of the arts in the light of the carving processes specific to negative spaces in sandstone. Technical challenges encountered by the carvers in the process of executing a rock-cut space include only seeing such spaces from the inside out, making it difficult to control the increasing shape and size of the room.¹⁷ Another characteristic of stone working is irreversibility. Carving out of living rock follows a linear progression, where room A must be carved before room B: the two cannot be constructed simultaneously. The material cannot be re-forged, melted down or added to: this aspect requires careful planning, and decision-making at each step.¹⁸ Rock-cut spaces are said to represent a sculptural, rather than an architectural problem. The only difference between the two is that the spaces are hollowed out from the inside, while sculpture is worked from the outside: this conceptually challenging reversal could explain “mistakes” by unexperienced carvers.¹⁹

¹⁵ Rudolph 1950:32.

¹⁶ Hunt 2008:35.

¹⁷ Rockwell 1993:189.

¹⁸ Rockwell 1993:12.

¹⁹ Rockwell 1993:190.

As a subtractive process, stone working allows us to look backwards from the final product to reconstruct a carving sequence. For this quality, lithic technologies led to the first formulation of the *chaîne opératoire*, this stock of “reference routines stored in the brain” which constitute the basis for any craft tradition.²⁰ Stone working has occupied a prominent position in the reflection on making processes initiated by the *anthropologie des techniques*. A pioneering figure of the school was French anthropologist and prehistorian André Leroi-Gourhan, later followed by the works of Haudricourt, Lemonnier, Lechtman and Ingold.²¹ When looking at artefacts, these works aim at identifying the human choices and gestures that lead from non-human technical constraints to specific stylistic features. To them, style is the result of choices which depend on cultural factors that transcend technological constraints. Technology, when considered as a cultural choice, is a historical process of selection, invention and borrowing of cultural practices.²² Technical factors are thus the physical rendering of mental schemes learned through tradition or experimentation. The nature of material, tools and carving techniques are internal to the creative process of the carved images, which are not reduced to pure visual communication. Such theoretical contributions constitute an essential link between the disciplines of archaeology and art history.

Approaching rock-cut caves as a craft tradition allows us to relate the style of the carvings to their production process, and to get closer the group of agents who created it. In previous chapters, our research topic was identified by reconsidering existing typologies, and uncovering relations between typology and potential functions of the burial space. The breaking down of existing typologies is now possible by reintroducing technology and making process in the understanding of shape and size. In this section, by piecing together the evidence from unfinished caves, and replicating a cave and a three-layered recessed door, we get closer to formulate a definition of the cave-making practice at hand.



²⁰ Dobres 2000:19.



²¹ Giraud et al.1970.

²² Lemonnier 1993:2.

6.5.2. Preparatory stage: Reconstructing a carving sequence from unfinished caves

A carving sequence is reconstructed below from examples of unfinished caves collected during survey, which forms a reference for the experimentally cut caves. The sequence draws connections between typologies, looking at when they diverge, and whether a tree of choices can be reconstructed. The table below shows three first steps in the carving sequence of a cave, which are common to all three typologies of caves (**Fig.6.36**).

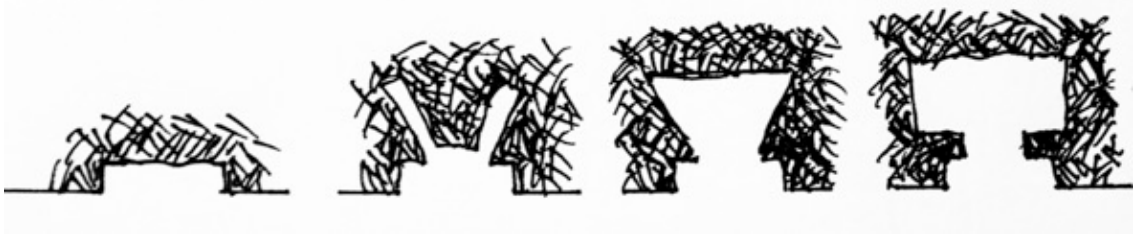
1	<p>The door is outlined in indirect percussion with a point chisel and a hammer.</p> <p>Often found next to door outlines is a spot of about 20cm of diameter where the stone surface is tested with a pick.</p>		<p>A) Outlined door with pick mark. Qigedong, Changning County, Sichuan Province. 178 CE.</p> <p>B) Peak mark. Citangpo, Anyue County, Sichuan Province. Eastern Han.</p>
2	<p>Parallel hatchings are carved with the punch and hammer to isolate a first chunk of stone.</p>		<p>A) Outlined door and hatchings. Qigedong, Changning County, Sichuan Province. 122- 178 CE.</p>

3	<p>The mason starts cleaving off horizontal chunks of stone.</p> <p>The shallow entrance needs to be extended sideways for a niche-like cave or in depth for both tunnels and chambers.</p>	 	<p>A) Unfinished door in Shuanghetang, Qijiang County. 80x100 cm. 181 CE.</p> <p>B) Detail: Cleaving trace. 6cm wide.</p>
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6.36. Three first steps in cutting a cave in sandstone.

The carving of a chamber requires a supplementary step in planning: the width of the door is extended sideways by two narrow chiselled trenches. At this stage the unfinished cave's ground plan is triangular in shape. Only in one occurrence did the excavation begin with the wall's bottom part, rather than by its sides: when hitting the

remaining top-central part, the rock easily falls off in big chunks. The last stage, by enlarging the inner volume both sideways and upwards, leads to the completion of a chamber-like cave (**Fig.6.37**).



6.37. Idealised carving sequence for a chamber-like cave.

Notice how, instead of excavating a straight tunnel, the carver has already reserved one recessed angle, which instantaneously creates a one-layer stepped door (**Fig.6.38**). He had to plan a slightly larger first outline beforehand, around 120cm wide, if he had in mind to ultimately create an 80cm opening.



6.38. Unfinished cave in Qigongzui, Qijiang county, Chongqing municipality.

To obtain a larger inner space, the last step is to cleave off the inner mass of rock in horizontal chunks. 120 x 30cm slightly concave smoothed areas are apparent on the back and side walls of the finished cave in Shuanhetang (**Fig.6.39**). This quarrying technique is valid for the back and side walls, while the thinner front wall is finished only with the chisel. In some cases, clear lines are added after this final stage to shape the ceiling, or to delimitate ceiling and walls. Cutting generally proceeds from the centre outwards, and from the ceiling down, requiring the establishment of a central line.²³ This might be one reason why ridged, triangular ceilings are encountered in tunnel-like caves.

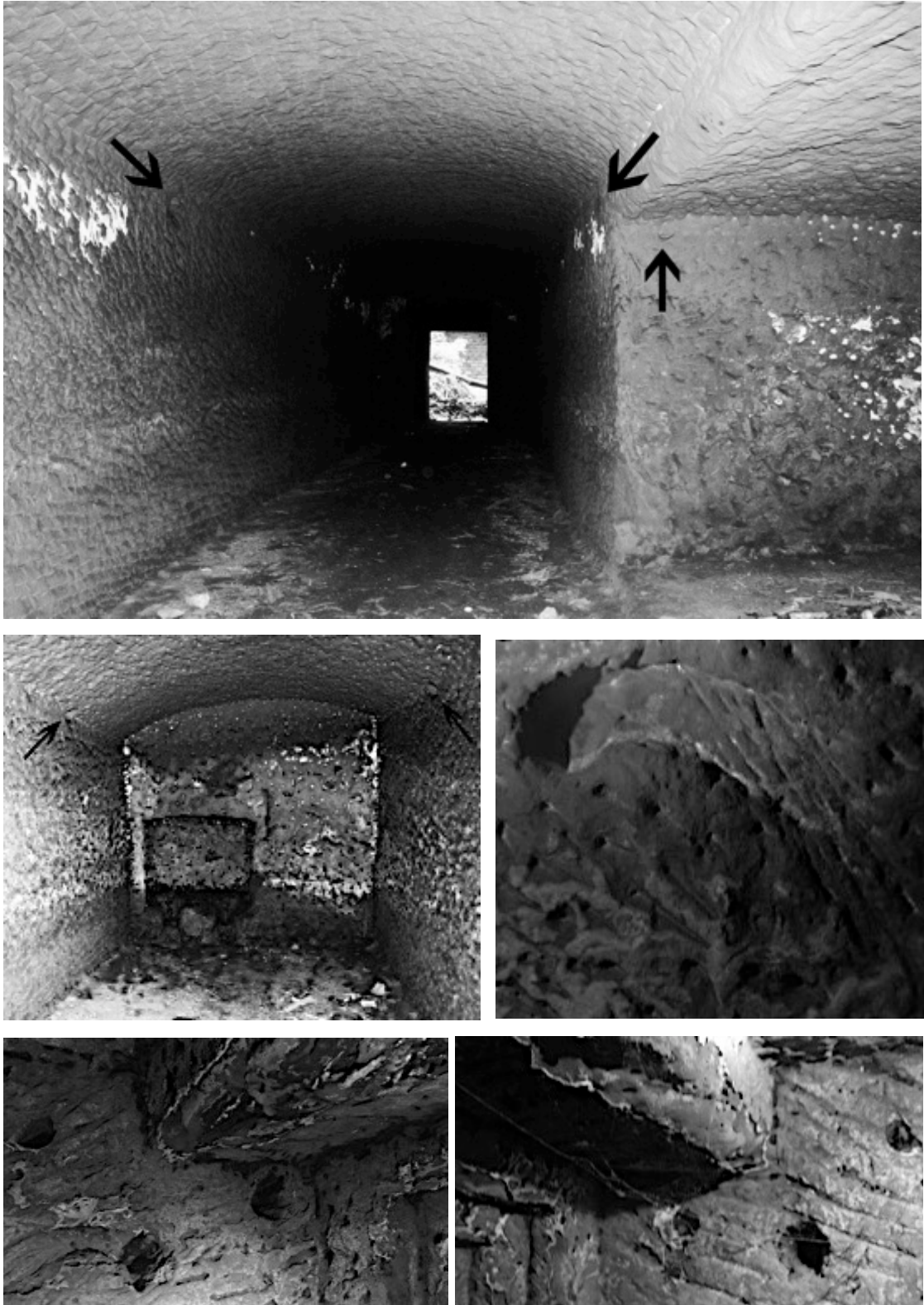
²³ Dodson 1991:56.



6.39. Cave no.1. in Shuanhetang. Qijiang county, Chongqing municipality. 181 CE.

The carving sequence resembles a mining process, where material has to be continuously extracted. For the cutting of deeper, complex Type 1 caves, Luo Erhu suggested the use of a mechanical procedure borrowed from the mining industry. The tunnels were excavated by “ramming” the stone with a wooden beam in rocking motion (*chongjishi dunzuanfa* 沖擊式頓鑽法).²⁴ This ram head, reinforced with a metal point, was suspended to an horizontal beam secured to the rock mass, through pairs of 10cm deep holes placed in front of each other, at regular intervals along the corridors (**Fig.6.40.A,B**). The holes are grooved towards the corridor’s entrance (**Fig.6.40.C**). The device was progressively displaced deeper into the tunnel, producing long, centripetal traces along main corridors, different from traces seen on inner walls. It could serve as a calibrating tool for the spatial dimensions, but also for structural elements such as stepped cornices (**Fig.6.40.D,E**). The “ramming technique” excavates 5 to 10m³ per day, resulting about ten times more efficient than the quarry pick.

²⁴ Luo Erhu 1987:35-8.



6.40. A-B) Symmetric pair of holes. C) Grooved hole. D-E) Paired series of three holes by a stepped door. Xiaoba. Chezi district, Leshan city, Sichuan province.

6.5.3. Replicating a rock-cut cave in sandstone: Aims and ethical considerations in experimental archaeology

In June 2015, two stonemasons were hired to replicate a cave and a three-layered recessed door. The first aim of this experiment was to build up a reference scale for the time, effort and skills involved in the carving of rock-cut monuments.²⁵ The second aim was to rethink current typologies for rock-cut burials, which are mostly based on the appearance of the finished cave. More widely, it was hoped that such an experiment would help us reconsider our definition of a stone working tradition. During the experiment, the focus was on the choices made by stonemasons during the carving process and the resulting variations in cave shape. With sandstone, an unpolishable type of rock processed *in situ*, we have the ideal conditions to provide a vivid experience of the carving gestures. Surface observation of tool traces, unfinished examples, errors or anomalies due to a break in transmission from craftsman to craftsman, the lack of experience, or simply direct experimentation without prior experience, are the most helpful events to get an insight into this process.²⁶ For example, discussions around the few choices to be made for more complex elements of style necessitating more planning were carefully recorded.

Although experimental archaeology is typically a monitored exercise of objective observation, the participating agents' cultural background (i.e. the stonemasons and the researcher), the interaction between them, as well as third party roles such as the foreman, the local authorities, etc. also play a part. Below a little information is offered about the agents' socio-economic background and the choices made when recording the situation. Both experiments were realized by the same duo of stonemasons, Master He and Master Fu, aged 58 and 63. Both had started their carrier as quarrymen. Following the mechanisation of stone quarrying, the masons diversified their activities and became migrant workers, like an estimated 260 million such workers in China today. They travel to faraway provinces for better wages, taking care of their fields back in Guang'an county, Sichuan province, when they are not busy. At the time of the experiment, the two masons were working on a restoration project supervised by the archaeological office of Banan District (巴南文物管理所). The office

²⁵ Useful advice was provided by Peng Minghao 2014.

²⁶ Dehejia and Rockwell 2011.

allowed our experiment to be set in a protected heritage area featuring a former residence of general Chiang-Kai shek, and agreed to lend us two of the stonemasons then working under their supervision.

Both masons have been in contact with rock-cut caves distributed around the countryside since their childhood: they thus already had an idea of what it looked like both from the outside and from the inside. Moreover, the workers were given photographs of unfinished caves dated to the Eastern Han dynasty. The images show several possibilities in the completion of a cave, leaving it free for the masons to choose their own solution to the technical problems encountered. No strict instructions were given but hypothetical reconstructions of the *chaîne opératoire*, or the ideal carving sequence, were shared with the workers.

6.5.4. Choice of a location: Experiment no.1

The first question faced by Experiment no.1 regarded the masons' or patrons' siting choices in the landscape, with respects to the availability and the quality of sandstone cliffs. I first thought that a cliff close to existing groups of Eastern Han caves would be the best option. With this idea in mind, cemeteries threatened by the on-going urbanization process were surveyed. Most of these sites, however, were uneasy to access for the researcher and the masons on a daily basis. The proposal of the archaeological office of Banan District to include the experiment in an existing protected heritage area, appeared to be the best available choice. The sandstone cliff selected is part of the catchment area around the Republican period villas. Within that area, the following elements were crucial in the choice of a location:

- Presence of an exposed sandstone surface of sufficient dimensions
- Quality of the sandstone: homogeneous with no faults, workable hardness.²⁷
- Accessibility: height from ground.
- Visibility: vegetation, orientation, surrounding topography.

When having to decide how to place the cave on the rock surface, the following elements were taken into account:

- The rock bedding should be parallel to the ground.

²⁷ Rababeh 2005:33.

- Middle of rock surface (wide enough sides to expand the chamber).
- Protection from run-off water (a canvas cover was added as it rained during 2 days).
- Presence of a working space where the masons would stand.
- Orthogonal cliff face (on a slightly sloping cliff, obtaining a vertical surface was the first step to be taken).

In a first 4-day experiment (15 to 19 June 2015), a boulder of sandstone was selected at the foot of the mountain. A two-layer recessed door was cut into the relatively hard material (**Fig.6.41**).²⁸ The overall progress of this first carving experiment went as follows (**Fig.6.42**):



6.41. View of Experiment no.1. June 2015. The inscription is part of the experiment and will be discussed in the next chapter.

Day 1	Obtaining a vertical surface
Day 2	Outer recession
Day 3	Inner recession
Day 4	Finishing

6.42. Calendar of Experiment no.1.

A significant proportion of Eastern Han caves are located below protruding parts in sandstone cliffs. These form natural shelters against direct and indirect rainwater. When no natural shelter is available, man-made gutter lines are often added above cave openings. The recessions added to the caves' opening often follow a narrow angle, to prevent the water drops from getting into the cave. In Experiment no.1, despite the fact that the cave opening was cut at a vertical angle, the slope of the cliff

²⁸ Despite the fact that they were using steel tools, some of them being tempered, the hardness of the sandstone in Experiment no.1 was such that the masons had to repair their chisels twice a day.

still led some rainwater to enter the cave. Master Fu spontaneously carved a deep trench above the left side of the cave opening to divert the water. A natural protruding zone on the cliff above the right side of the cave opening already played that role, so that the trench was not prolonged to cover the hole doorframe.

As most of the Eastern Han caves surveyed by this study are raised above ground at the height of 1-15m, a one meter height was estimated sufficient to understand the adaptations in posture that the masons would have to make. A narrow cornice of about 20cm wide appeared sufficient for the masons to stand on while carving in the first stage. During the next stage, when a 20cm depth was already gained on the sloping cliff surface, the masons stood on this step, thus not needing to rely on anything else than the space they had gained in the living rock.

Obtaining a vertical angle for the door appeared to be the most time-consuming part. Caves that are carved on a naturally vertical surface can skip this stage. This point is quite important, since rock-cut spaces cut before the actual cave opening are often reported as “tomb trench/corridor” (*mudao* 墓道; *dao* could be a trench/alley, thus not necessarily with a ceiling, or a corridor/tunnel.) in archaeological reports, blurring the frontier between a functional adaptation to the available cliff surface and a stylistic choice understood as a typological difference.

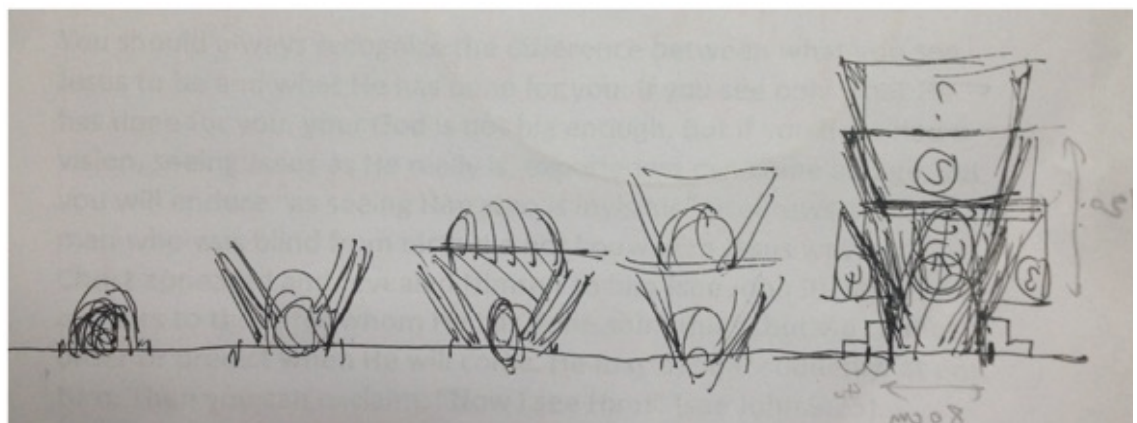
6.5.5. Building a reference scale: Experiment no.2

In a second 5-day experiment (25 to 30 June 2015), following the advice of the masons themselves, a softer sandstone cliff was selected on top of the same mountain, where a one cubic metre rock-cut chamber was cut. No recession was added to the cave opening this time, the aim of the experiment being to understand the procedure leading to a cubic chamber, and the constraints occasioned on the masons' movements in a diminished space. All movements requiring holding the hammer above the head represented a much more strenuous effort (**Fig.6.43**).



6.43. View of Experiment no.2. June 2015.

In the carving sequence deduced from unfinished caves, a first tunnel cuts orthogonally into the cliff surface, followed by two oblique trenches that expand the space sideways, creating a triangular volume. This volume is then extended inwards, the chamber only becoming cubic in the last step of the carving process (**Fig.6.44**).



6.44. Sketch of carving sequence from day 1 to day 5, with stage 4 as rejected by the masons.

During Experiment no.2, an observation was made after cutting the oblique trenches. Instead of forming a volume on a triangular ground plan to then square it gradually as

was done in the experiment, the masons realized that striking the rock directly at a 90° angle on both sides of the first 40cm deep tunnel, would have been quicker and produced a more regular surface. The overall progress of Experiment no.2 is summarized in the table below (Fig.6.45).

Day 1	Digging a 40cm deep tunnel as wide and high as the cave opening.
Day 2	Extending the space both sides following oblique lines, to obtain a triangular shape, deep 40 cm.
Day 3	Extending the space both sides following oblique lines, to obtain a triangular shape, deep 40 cm.
Day 4	Extending the wider back wall orthogonally to the cliff face, deep 20-30 cm.
Day 5	Finishing the corners behind the cave opening, and flattening the ceiling, to obtain a cubic volume.

6.45. Calendar of Experiment no.2.

15 sandstone flakes were picked up *in situ* during both carving experiments; including three samples taken during Experiment no.1, and 12 samples during Experiment no.2 (Fig.6.46 and 47). I subsequently started taking samples from the inside of actual Eastern Han rock-cut caves. The degree to which weathering changes the quality of the rock still makes the use of these samples for comparative purposes uncertain. Ideal further developments of this project would be the contribution to an existing digital database of stone material, tools, tool marks and carving gestures.²⁹



6.46. Collected sandstone samples.

²⁹ <http://www.artofmaking.ac.uk/>

Sample	Experiment	Day	Time of the Day	Notes
1	Experiment no.1	Day 1		
2		Day 2		
3		Day 3		
4	Experiment no.2	Day 1	Early Morning	
5			Morning after 3 hours of work	
6			Afternoon	40cm deep
7		Day 2	9:34 am	Iron sheet embedded in the sandstone
8			Morning after 3 hours of work	
9			Afternoon	
10		Day 3	Afternoon	
11		Day 4	Morning	fragment of a bigger piece
12			Morning after 3 hours of work	
13			Afternoon	
14			Afternoon	Fragment selected by Fu
15		Day 5	Afternoon	harder vein

6.47. Sample collection (numbers refer to photograph above from left to right, top to bottom).

In the course of the experiment, a few thoughts were developed about the qualities of stone as seen by geologists and stonemasons:³⁰

- Geology defines the hardness of rock as its compressive strength, i.e. its ability to withstand the type of pressures which cause faults and fractures.
- The fact that sandstone on top of the mountain is softer than on the bottom is probably more the result of weathering than of pressure, since pressures over that scale should be minimal. The environment of deposition might have changed, causing the top rocks to be softer in that formation.
- Sandstone as a sedimentary rock is supposed to be horizontally bedded, but during the carving process it was chipping off in vertical flakes. Could either be a result of the sedimentary bedding turned sideways or vertical fractures.
- Variation in lithology and degree of weathering play a much larger role in the ability to carve than the pressure of the mountain. Relevant differences in the rock composition include: grain size, cementation, porosity, grain composition.

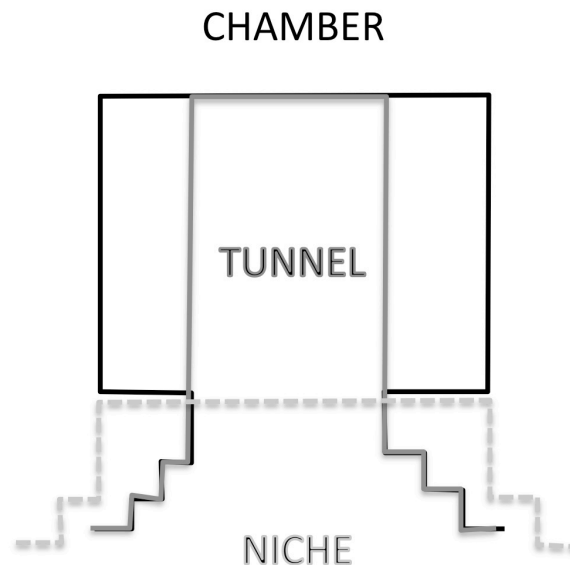
A gap was observed between conceptual understandings of hardness for example, and the workability of stone for carving purposes.³¹

³⁰ Conversation with Jack Gillespie, PhD Candidate at the University of Adelaide, School of Physical Science, Department of Earth Science, on the 19th of July 2015.

³¹ For an example of geologist studying rock-cut monuments, see Kostov 2008.

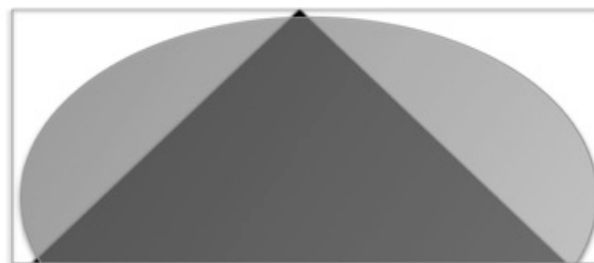
6.5.6. Identifying a Type 2 stone working tradition

Niche, tunnel and chamber caves can be replaced one carving sequence from simple to complex (**Fig.6.48**).



6.48. Niche, tunnel and chamber superimposed.

Stylistic elements which differentiate caves of a similar type are the number of recessed layers added to the caves' doorframe, and the shape of the caves' ceiling. Experiment no.1 reproduced the most complex type of doorframe, with two or three layers of recessions; a photographic record was kept of intermediary stages (single layer and/or two layers). Ceilings can also be placed in an order of complexity: from a triangular ceiling, organized in two slopes going from a raised central line to the walls on both sides; to a vaulted ceiling, where the slopes adopt a curved shape; or a flat ceiling, where the whole cave is raised above the height of the cave opening (**Fig.6.49**).



6.49. Three types of ceilings placed in a carving sequence.

While their location in the landscape and the addition of recessions to cave openings confer a strong visual identity to Type 2 cemeteries, the technological choices leading to each type of caves and to the recessed doors remain rudimentary. The solutions involved are too basic to artificially relate them into a firm and unified tradition of handwork.³² Simply by observing existing caves, the stonemasons were able to produce comparable chambers in a small amount of time. Apart from the use of iron tools which was most certainly introduced by Han colonists, the local cave-making practices involved in the production of Type 2 caves mobilize only simple technological processes, which often show traces of first time experiment or one-off enterprises by part-time masons. A rock-cut space requires no quarrying, no transport, no placement or assemblage techniques, and no limitation in available material. Also, rock-cut spaces easily reach a monumental scale, suiting the purposes of “a technically unsophisticated or economically limited society can create a larger monument than it could by any other process”.³³

6.6. Summary: The Type 2 stone working tradition

In the light of the insights arising from this chapter, Type 2 cemeteries south of the Yangzi take greater shape as coherent phenomenon both in the way they occupy the landscape, and in their typological and stylistic innovations. This chapter looked at how such innovations were carried out from the point of view of production. As observed through experiments in replicating Type 2 caves and recessed doors, Type 2 cemeteries have a distinct visual identity but are the result of simple technological choices. Type 2 tradition appears as a simplified version of Type 1 distributed over a wider area, but extra care and effort is taken in the choice of a scenic, high-placed location and consistent formats and shapes are adopted for the caves, especially in the decades between 160 and 190 CE.

Apart from cave shapes, the main characteristic of caves documented in terms of occurrences, measurements and variation are the recessed doors. Recessions added to doorframes, systematically present and relatively standardized, stand at the interface between technology and style. The doors create a distinction between the caves south of the Yangzi and their Type 1 homologues, but it also within Type 2 cemeteries. The

³² Bluemel 1927.

³³ Rockwell 1993:188.

recessed doors act as a signature of the Type 2 tradition. Symbolic aspects of the recessed door will be looked at in Chapter 8, along with other architectural elements. Further questions are raised about the Type 2 tradition and the actors involved in the next chapter, and the 34 dated caves in the Qi River are further contextualised by comparing a wider pool of epigraphic inscriptions found in Type 1 and Type 2 caves.

7. Comparative study of inscriptions in Type 1 and Type 2 burial caves

This chapter is devoted to epigraphic inscriptions found in burial caves south of the Yangzi. Late Eastern Han inscriptions found on the frontier are compared to Eastern Han epigraphy in the Sichuan basin and elsewhere, with a focus on technical skills and cultural belonging. Inscriptions are present in higher concentrations in the Qi River area, the secondary tributary of the Yangzi investigated in the previous chapter. The inscriptions deliver some information on the production process, on the way the caves were used and perceived, and on the identity of their makers.

An appendix to Chapter 7 entitled “11.4. Inscriptions Table” provides a record of inscriptions with transcribed content, annotated translation, and rubbings or photography of the inscriptions. All inscriptions mentioned in the text are hereafter referred to as “Table + A (south of the Yangzi)/B (Outside of study area) + entry number”.

7.1. Epigraphic evidence

About 50 epigraphic inscriptions associated with rock-cut caves are known among the tens of thousands of rock-cut caves south of the Upper Yangzi River. My survey proved that inscriptions are more frequent than the published reports initially suggest, but inscribed caves remain a small minority.

Embedded as they are into the sandstone cliff faces, the inscriptions can be studied in relation to their physical context, in terms of content, chronology and distribution on the cliff face. The majority of the inscriptions refer to dynastic eras, many are precise to the year, month, or day. Ideally, one would wish to confront the narrative found in transmitted texts to the historical window opened by *in situ* inscriptions. There are several reasons that limit the reach of such an analysis. Firstly, the inscribed caves provide only a minority voice for an overwhelming record of stone carvings. Secondly, south of the Yangzi, the habit of inscribing rock-cut caves only lasts for a century, between 122 and 223 CE, while cliff inscriptions are found a century earlier in the Sichuan basin. Lastly, the cliff inscriptions belong to a different level of language than the discursive transmitted texts, cumulating both practical (manufacture marking,

contract) and metaphorical functions (commemorative, apotropaic). Apart from providing a temporal framework for Type 2 caves, and in particular the Qi River caves, epigraphy contains information on the making of a cave and records an agreement between the maker and the patron.

In the cliff inscriptions, most of the terms used in designating the caves seem to refer directly to a funerary function (塚, 葬, 墓), often preceded by a pronoun (此). However, only a small proportion of caves are inscribed. Since nearly all of the tens of thousands of Type 2 rock-cut spaces were found open, with no trace of a sealing device, and contain no human remains or artefacts, the shortcuts implied in calling them “tombs” should be carefully handled. An effort is made here to consider the range of practices included in the many stages of funerary event, potentially involving more than just a corpse stored once and for all into a sealed chamber.

Finally, epigraphy in itself is a skilled practice with strong cultural connotations, which the last subsection revisits experimentally.

7.1.1. Dates in epigraphy: A temporal window

Inscriptions on rock-cut burials are not a contemporaneous phenomenon across Southwest China. In the Sichuan basin, epigraphic dates found in rock-cut burials start from 77 CE (Jiangkou). None of the available dates exceed the year 160 CE, with later dates being all found on other types of burials, such as the 209 CE inscription on an over ground funerary structure found in Ya'an. In the Yangzi gorges area,¹ rock-cut burials datable by inscriptions are found mostly between 135 CE (Baxian Longwangdong) and 185 CE (Baxian Jiangjiagang). Earlier dates all come from inscriptions in brick chamber burials, ranging from 81 CE (Wushan Wagangcao M12) to 125 CE (Baojintou M14). Dated rock-cut burials available south of the Yangzi cover the years 106 CE (Yanfenggou) to 223 CE (Sanchahe), but most dates are later than 160 CE. Available dated inscriptions in rock-cut cemeteries in the three regions thus range from 77 to 160 CE for the Sichuan basin, from 135 to 185 CE for the Yangzi gorges and from 106 to 223 CE for the area south of the Yangzi.

¹ See Jiang Xiaochun 2010:89 for a table gathering 26 burials with inscribed and dated artefacts found in the Three Gorges area.

The inscriptions are systematically concerned with exact dating: reign year, lunar months and precise day are stated in 42 inscriptions out of the 50. Because Chinese dating is word-consuming (between 8 and 12 characters), dates stand for more than 40% of the text. Apart from the changing era title, this sequence of characters necessitates a limited literacy of 13 characters (numbers, year, month, and day). The dates are harmonized with the imperial time established in the capital, Luoyang, with only three exceptions, where errors remain within less than a year.²

Most inscriptions found south of Yangzi are dated to the 170-180s CE, an observation that was made with the 34 dated caves found in the Qi River as well. In the Central Plains, according to Ebrey's survey, 70% of Eastern Han dated inscriptions were produced between 151 and 200 CE.³ An event mirroring this sudden infatuation for epigraphy is the carving of the Classics in the capital city, Luoyang, between 175 and 183 CE. The boom in funerary production in the last quarter of the Eastern Han corresponds to a weakened central government, which led educated men to remain in or return to their local communities instead of making a career at the capital.⁴ If made to correspond to the events listed in historical texts, the dates of the inscriptions in my study area also correspond to a situation of political unrest and intense religious activity in the Sichuan region, analysed in Chapter 2.

The 170s-180s boom is followed by the widespread looting or demolition of funerary monuments at the end of the Han, mainly to re-use the land and the stones as building materials. Brashier cites the example of Xie Yiwu 謝夷吾 requesting that his son bury him in a deep grave with no mound, for fear of looting.⁵ The golden age of funerary carvings ended with the 206 CE edict by Cao Cao 曹操, a law against the erection of commemorative inscriptions and stone tombs. Inscriptions south of the Yangzi thus correspond to a trend at the scale of the empire, but the custom of inscribing tombs and erecting ostentatious funerary monuments seems to have here outlived the

² The three inscriptions in Qigedong and Sanchahe were discussed in subsections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 of Chapter 5. Refer to Table A26, 28 and 46.

³ Tables 1-2 in Ebrey 1980:332.

⁴ Ebrey 1980:352-3. Powers 1991 similarly identifies the consumers of modular assembled stone chambers to low-ranking local officials, detailed in his Chapter 4: "Economic Dimensions of Structure and Style".

⁵ Brashier 2011:176.

twilight of the Han. As was noticed in the previous chapter, however, inscriptions south of the Yangzi are not necessarily associated with the finest examples of rock-cut caves. The function of inscriptions is thus further questioned here.

As we will see in the following subsections, dates could stand for the moment the cave was excavated, sold or sealed or re-used.

7.1.2. Duration of the excavation work

The inscriptions usually only provide one date, leaving us unsure whether it indicates the beginning, or the end of the construction process. Some of the terms designating the caves, such as stone (石) and more rarely, hole (穿) refer to the material and techniques involved in their making. The manufacturing act itself is usually coined by a generic “to make” (作 or 造). The only known example of an inscription recording both the beginning (造) and the completion (成) of an excavation project is the Shiziwan inscription, which documents the process lasting between 26 and 19 months between 158-159 CE to September 160 CE:

延熹一年造，三年七月成

Made on the 1st year of the Yanxi era, and completed on the 7th month of the 3rd year.⁶

The Shiziwan rock-cut space associated with this inscription is a Type 1 monumental open antechamber connecting several rock-cut chambers. No such record is found in the study area, as Type 2 caves are single cavities of much smaller dimensions. Because it states the length of the excavation, the Shiziwan inscription was apparently carved after the cave’s completion. When only one date is given like in Type 2 caves, it remains impossible to determine whether the inscriptions were carved before or after the cave was excavated. Indeed, since inscriptions are mostly executed in the antechamber of the caves or above cave doors, thus on the stone walls which are excavated first, an inscription could as well have been carved on the first day of excavation. The same question applies to the relation between line-carved depictions clustered around the cave openings, and the caves themselves.

⁶ Table B10.

7.1.3. Volume studies

Another element worth mentioning, that would support the idea of an inscription directly related to the physical features of the cave, are the dimensions of the caves. Three inscriptions found in Type 1 burials in Xiaoba, Leshan, provide this kind of information. The 159 CE inscription describes the halls as wide 9 *zhang* 丈, thus 20m, with four doors or chambers (四穴),⁷ and possibly a corridor (口入) wide 8 *chi* 尺, thus 1.8m:

延熹二年三月十日，佐孟機為子男乃造此塚，端行九丈左右，有四穴口入八尺當口由川世中出

In the 2nd year of the Yanxi era, on the 10th day of the 3rd month, Zuo Mengji made this tomb for his son. [it is] wide 9 *zhang*, with 4 chambers, a corridor of 8 *chi*, (...).⁸

The 149 CE inscription mentions similar dimensions: 23.1m wide by 6.9m long for the entrance (口門), 2.31m for the door (*hu* 戶),⁹ and 1.8m again for the chamber (川)¹⁰ situated right of the door:

建和三年正月二十日造此塚，立行十丈，口門三丈，川戶一丈，入川戶右方，穴八尺有兩枚。周代造此塚，后子孫率來

In the 3rd year of the Jianhe era, on the 20th day of the 1st month, [I] made this tomb, [it is] high 10 *zhang*, its door [measures] 3 *zhang*, its burial chamber [measures] 1 *zhang*, on the right of this chamber, there is an 8 *chi* cave, and two *mei* 枚. Zhou Dai made this tomb, for the use of his descendants.¹¹

As noticeable from the afore-mentioned examples, In Type 1 inscriptions found in complex rock-cut tombs, specific parts of the funerary space are distinguished such as passage (...入), entrance or door (門, 戶), chamber (川, 內, 穴),... The reading of the terms can sometimes controversial (*mei* 枚), and their physical counterpart is often not readily identifiable.¹² No term readily designates the niches, for example, that are almost systematically present inside the caves. The term “pillar” (*qizhu* 栖柱), could designate a stone central pillar, but it is originally borrowed from wooden architecture.

⁷ The term “hole” 穴 could stand for the door, but more probably for inner spaces, since it could be read as “indoor” 內.

⁸ Table B18.

⁹ Chen Xuan 2015:42 and 70 insists on the symbolic aspect of the 戶 as a locus for domestic sacrifice and a mark of clanic identity.

¹⁰ Chen Xuan 2015:35 reads 川 as 穿 for a chamber where the coffin was placed.

¹¹ Table B22.

¹² *Mei* 枚 could be part of a specific vocabulary used by masons/patrons for the rock-cut spaces, as suggested by Chan Xuan 2015:35.

In the 77 CE Jiangkou inscription,¹³ the term “cliff coffin” (*yaguan* 崖棺) designates a rock-cut coffin realized in the cave, after its completion, for another member of the family. The term is a rare occurrence of original terminology from Eastern Han times adopted by scholarship in modern Chinese language. Usually, for one original term, similar objects cumulate a whole range of more or less equivalent terms in modern Chinese, which can be misleading when building typologies from descriptive terms found in reports and inventories.

I was not able to verify these dimensions with the caves’ dimensions, since most of the inscriptions only survive through rubbings. However, the scale of these caves corresponds to Type 1 antechambers connected to several burial chambers, mostly excavated with a “ramming” or mining technique mentioned in the previous chapter.¹⁴ It is hard to tell from only two examples if the cited dimensions correspond to standard or unit of measure in the width and length of each element (doorframe, height to ceiling, length, width, niches if any). What we can tell is that dimensions, much like the prices to be seen in the next section, were part of an agreement worth recording between the mason and the patron.

7.1.4. Prices in cash

A category of documents found in tombs, the land contract (*di quan* 地券), negotiates the plot of land where the deceased is buried, recording the buyer and seller’s name, the location, the plot’s dimensions, its price, and the witnesses of the transaction.¹⁵ The afore-mentioned values, found both in Type 1 and Type 2 caves, are here re-contextualized by relating the prices cited in inscriptions to the type of cave they are associated with, and by comparing them with equivalent prices found in a non-funerary context.

Among the four occurrences of prices, two reach 25,000 cash, one of them being dated 181 CE, but they correspond to different artefacts:¹⁶ the price for the making of a small

¹³ Table B2.

¹⁴ Luo Erhu 1987:35-8.

¹⁵ Seidel 1987:24-7.

¹⁶ Table A20 and 39.

single cavity is exactly that of a quarried stone coffin, 25,000 cash.¹⁷ Another cave dated 133 CE reaches 40,000 cash for a cave of similar dimensions to the 181 CE cave worth 25,000 cash, which suggests that other factors could raise the price of a cave apart from its size.¹⁸ One other factor might be the value of the land occupied by the tomb. The earlier Jiangkou inscription, dated 68 BCE, records the acquisition of a piece of land for the purpose of building a tomb:

地節二年口月,巴州民楊量買山,值錢千百,作業塚,子孫永保,其母替

In the 2nd year of the Dijie era, on the (...) month, a villager from Bazhou, Yang Liang, bought a mountain worth more than a thousand cash, to build his family tomb, for the eternal protection of his descendants, in the name of his mother.¹⁹

We do not know whether the piece of land referred to as “mountain” encompassed more than just the slope or vertical cliff where the caves were cut, or whether arable land was attached to the burial ground. Possibly, locations for tombs had a value of their own. The highest mentioned price occurs in the Sanchahe inscription, a Type 2 burial dated 223 CE:

章武三年七月十日,姚立從曹意買大父曹孝梁右一門,七十萬畢。知者廖誠社六墓姚胡及母

In the 3rd year of the Zhangwu era, on the 10th day of the 7th month, Yao Li bought from Cao Yi's father Cao Xiaoliang, this door on the left for 700,000 cash. Liao Cheng and Du Liu witnessed the transaction. Yao Hu and his mother were buried.²⁰

It boasts the huge amount of 700,000 cash, and records a more complicated transaction. Probably the trace of a contract between Yao and Zeng, this transaction is the only one to mention a witness (知者). The higher sum involved suggests that the burials' value could represent an investment, susceptible to being re-used. This potential case of re-use, implying a change in the function of the caves, corresponds to the latest date in our time span, 223 CE, which is also a turning point in history between the Eastern Han and Three Kingdoms periods. Another way to explain the exorbitant sum evoked would be that the meaning of the inscription is symbolic. While land

¹⁷ Coffins very rarely record dates, which are inscribed in a much smaller format, and remain, stored inside the cave. One exception is found in Table A22.

¹⁸ Table A21.

¹⁹ Table B23.

²⁰ Table A46.

contracts in the first century CE examples resemble real transactions, their content turns metaphoric from the late 2nd century CE onwards.²¹

Another way to investigate the reliability of prices is to compare them to prices in a non-funerary context. The word used to express value, *zhi* 直, is also found on a non-funerary stele reconverted into a tomb door found in Pixian County, Sichuan Province: the “Broken Stele of Wang Xiaoyuan”.²² Here, *zhi* 直 expresses the value of fields (田) counted in *mu* 亩. One *mu* (circa 614.4 m²) is estimated around 6,000 cash, while land in mortgage (質) only costs between 500 and 2,000 cash. Another term, *gu* 賈, is used to express the sale of a building (舍), which can reach between 40,000 and 170,000 cash. Other items are cited, such as an ox worth 15,000 cash (牛一頭萬五千),²³ and slaves. A reference specifying the price of burials for soldiers who died on the Shu western frontier, in the war against the Qiang 羌, can be found in law texts on wooden strips: for the burial of lesser officials, their families are given 30,000 cash, as compared to 50,000 cash for higher officials, and 3,000 cash for conscripts, convicts and slaves.²⁴

The observations above suggest that, if realistic, most prices mentioned in our inscriptions show a monetary investment corresponding to the expenses for official burials in the Han empire, between 5 and 10 sq.km. of land, two or three oxen. There is the possibility, however, that prices do not relate to the actual carving of the cave, but to the land the cave is located on, or to expenses related to the funerary rituals. Indeed, as demonstrated by the experiment of replicating a cave in soft sandstone led in the previous chapter, the investment in time, effort and skill for a single Type 2 cave remains modest.

7.1.5. What is the recorded event?

Another fact regarding dates is that of the nature of the event they are standing for. In Lushan, two events are accurately dated: the time of death and the time of burial of

²¹ Seidel 1987:24-7.

²² Table B7. Gao Wen 1990:15

²³ Oxen or water buffalos are used as a unit to evaluate the cost of rock-cut burials in Toraja, reaching 2 to 3 water buffalos per cubic metre excavated. The caves are a family enterprise of comparable size, but might necessitate a major effort investment as they are excavated from hard stone instead of soft red sandstone. Waterson 1995:207.

²⁴ Hulsewé 1990:228-230.

the deceased, each separated by nine months. In this case, we are thus not speaking of a single event, but of a period in time.

故上計史王暉伯昭以建安十六歲在辛卯九月下旬卒。其十七年六月甲戌葬
嗚呼哀哉

The deceased official Wang Hui, *zi* Bo Zhao, on the 16th year of the Jian'an era, a *xinmao* year, towards the end of the 9th month, passed away. In the 17th year, on the *jiaxu* day of the 6th month, he was buried. Alas!²⁵

Encountered in both Type 1 and Type 2 burials, the concern with keeping precise records of the time of death is sometimes seen as a characteristic of Han funerary culture. This obsession with precise dating betrays concerns about afterlife administrative errors, as in the bureaucratized heaven of Han times, where the name and dates of birth and death of the deceased are kept in a “Registers of Souls”.²⁶ In case the date could be chosen, as for the burial ceremony, its astrologic properties could have mattered. In the Shifutou inscription, the term *renzi* 壬子 designates a stem-branch combination corresponding to a specific moment of the day, from 11pm to 1am. Does this indicate that the stone masons started to work in the middle of the night at a time deemed auspicious, or does it tell the time of death of the tomb occupant?

延光元年十一月十五日壬子／羊蒼口閔宗作石塚百姓明知也

In the 1st year of the Yanguang era, on the 15th day of the 11th month, on *renzi*, Yang Cang (...) Min Zong to make a stone tomb so that common people would see it.²⁷

More specifically, the Shuanghetang inscription uses the term *qidu* 七度, which designates a specific position of the stars. In the calendric treatises of the Hanshu, where the expression is used for a specific seasonal change, *qidu* is also found in a “month + day + *qidu*” succession.²⁸

光和四年七月卅日七度資多石

In the 4th year of the Guanghe era, on the 30th day of the 7th month, in *qidu*, [!] paid for a large amount of stone.²⁹

We have considered the possibility that the dates might stand for the moment of death, necessitating accurate recording, or to record a selected auspicious moment. Even then,

²⁵ Table B5.

²⁶ Nickerson 2006:10 and Brashier 1996:135.

²⁷ Table A42.

²⁸ Translation Note A14.

²⁹ Table A14.

as we have seen, several options remain valid: the beginning or the end of funerary rites, or the specific act of entombment or even the transaction whereby the tomb owner has acquired this piece of land. Burial formats as perceived in the archaeological record are really only a snapshot that may represent an intermediate moment in the mortuary process or “death cycle” rather than a final conclusion.

7.1.6. Seasonality

The dates indicate a certain consistency in the chosen months,³⁰ possibly a preferred moment of the “agricultural year” (年).³¹ 20 dates among 37 for which a precise month is given fall between March and May, a period that corresponds to the hot dry summer of the Monsoon.³² This coincides with the “Monsoon cycle of warfare”, where rice is grown in the rainy season and war is conducted in the dry season. It is thus possible that stonemasons avoided the wet season (May to September) and the dry cold season to work. In that case, stone carving could have been only a part-time activity for the people, aside from farming activity.

This also suggest that caves were planned in advance for the elderly, a practice still commonly encountered among highland communities in present day Guizhou province, where coffins are then stored under the houses on pile. Alternatively, the body would need to be temporarily stored while awaiting a cave to be cut. In her description of Eastern Han mourning practices, Brown suggests that “the period between coffining and interment varied from several months to several years (...), the more important the deceased, the longer his body went unburied.”³³ This time delay was necessary to construct the more elaborate tombs needed by the elite, but also for purposes that remain invisible in the archaeological record, such as allowing relatives to arrive from great distances, or performing more complex rites.³⁴ It is possible that the dry season was preferred to conduct funerary rites for both practical and symbolic reasons, if the

³⁰ Converted on the Academia Sinica Chinese Calendar Converter.

³¹ Cook 1995:261.

³² Michaud 2000:9-10.

³³ Brown 2007:16. See also mourning duties according to social status in Ebrey 1974:173–205.

³⁴ In Toraja rock-cut burials, stratification similarly remains invisible to the archaeologist. The wealthy and the commoners alike have the right to be buried in a cave, but the rich stay a few months to several years in the house of the living before being brought to the cave, they are better maintained, their clothes keep being changed regularly after entombment, and offerings left in their cliffside graves. The commoners' corpses, instead, are simply wrapped and moved quickly to the graves. Hutchinson 2002:33.

rites involved travelling for kin members, outdoor gatherings, time-consuming rites or offerings of specific plants or animal types.

7.1.7. Re-use

Inscriptions are sometimes found in groups of 2 to 13 within single Type 2 sites, like in Baishulin and Qigedong. These sites are not the result of a punctual event but of successive interventions over a longer period. Interestingly, the two sites have in common some outstanding features.

Among the 13 inscriptions in Qigedong, seven dated occurrences cover a 56-year-long period of intense carving activity.³⁵ Seven rock-cut caves are overlapping or juxtaposed with four unfinished doors, which have only been outlined (**Fig.7.1**). Only four among the inscriptions, however, relate clearly to the construction of a cave. The other inscriptions might relate to the rich pictorial production attached. Another possibility, since three of the caves contain more than one rock-cut coffin, would be that supplementary inscriptions relate to the addition of a coffin in an existing cave, or to the entombment of a supplementary person within the same burial.³⁶ The caves do not possess a door, but they may have been simply sealed with re-openable wooden planks, like in Toraja burials (**Fig. 7.2**).

³⁵ Table A23 to A35.

³⁶ Table B3.



7.1. Qigedong site. Changning County, Sichuan province. 122-178 CE.



7.2. Rock-cut burials with decorated wooden doors. Tana Toraja, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Early 20th century. Source: Kis-Jovak 1988:61.

Type 1 multichambered tombs closer to the Chengdu plain are also proven to cover long time spans. In Qingsheng, two inscriptions respectively dated 76 CE and 118 CE cover a 42-year-long time span. These are associated with at least three burials, within different chambers of the same cave.

建初元年十月造

Made in the 1st year of the Jianchu era, on the 10th month.³⁷

元初五年十一月二十七日楊得採藏

In the 5th year of the Yuanchu era, on the 27th day of the 11st month, Yang Decai was buried.³⁸

While the earlier inscription uses the term “to make” (造), the second one uses the term “to conceal/store” (藏), instead of the more frequent “to bury” (葬／葬). The inscriptions suggest that the cave is used more than once. The fact that the tomb can be re-opened and that later generations have access to the bodily remains of their ancestors opens the way to speculations about the type of funerary practice.

Ethnographic studies abound in examples of re-burial practices and manipulation of corpses, which bring into question assumptions made by archaeologists on funerary spaces as static receptacles.³⁹ Early accounts on the inhabitants of Guizhou Province, such as the Qing dynasty “Miao albums”, happen to describe such practices (**Fig.7.3**). This custom struck the Han observer because he belonged to a culture that practiced ground burial where explicit care was taken to separate the dead from the living. The accompanying text to the depiction below reports groups that

“...open the grave, take out the bones, and wash them till they are white. Then they wrap them up and bury them again. The bone washing is carried out seven times. If a family member should fall ill, it is said that the ancestor’s bones are not clean, and therefore they wash them again. Because of this custom (they) are called Bone-washing Miao (洗骨苗).”⁴⁰

³⁷ Table B8.

³⁸ Table B9.

³⁹ In Sulawesi, among the Toraja, re-burial is practiced in relation to rock-cut burials. Volkman reports that “a cliffside grave cleaning and reorganization ceremony takes place every five to ten years. Corpses are rewrapped by family members and effigy statues given fresh new clothes. At this time, corpses sometimes even are relocated from one grave to another if relatives are in dispute or feel there is a valid reason to realign the social ties of the dead to their living descendants. These changes in the burial format of the dead are no longer an isolated expression of the dead’s status, but rather indicate the traffic or shifting relationships among living individuals whose own interactions can be transformed publicly through actions on the dead body.” Volkman 1985:145 cited in Hutchinson 2002:46.

⁴⁰ Translation by Deal and Hostettler 2006:99.



7.3. Washing-bones Miao (*xigu Miao* 洗骨苗). Untitled and Anonymous. Circa 1797. Source: Entry no. 49 in Deal and Hostetler 2006:98.

Unfortunately, none of the published or surveyed caves south of the Yangzi provided physical evidence for secondary burial practices, so that our speculations can only be based on cave typology.

7.1.8. The tomb owning group

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the question of family burials in Type 1 rock-cut tombs of the Sichuan basin and the Three Gorges area under the Eastern Han has recently attracted scholarly attention. Tombs for couples exist since the mid-Western Han (about 80 BCE), and storing two bodies in a tomb is actually one of the reasons why the tombs switch from coffin-like to chamber-like typology. In terms of technology, the vault is introduced in tomb architecture for this very reason.⁴¹ Along with the tomb acting as this metaphor for a house, the entombed also become a metaphor for a couple, and later for a transgenerational family. Only in the late Eastern Han do three or four people start to be fit into a single burial, denoting difference in family and lineage conceptions. In this regard, and as underlined by Chen Xuan, the Eastern Han

⁴¹ Nickel 2012.

rock-cut tomb not only does not represent a technical challenge as the brick vault did, but it even offers more creative possibilities in terms of arrangement and layout, to express the identity of an extended family or a tomb group.⁴²

Inscriptions from Type 1 caves are explicit about the underlying familial structure. The shortest type of inscription in Type 1 caves is a one-character family name, like on the Xiaoba door lintel, marking the entrance to the Chen 陳 family tomb (**Fig.7.4**). In longer inscriptions, names of different agents are enumerated. These include the commemorator,⁴³ the deceased (often mentioning his relation to the commemorator: son, husband...), the stonemason, and in one case, the witness of the transaction.



7.4. Chen 陳 family name on door lintel in Xiaoba. Leshan city, Sichuan province.

Representative of complex Type 1 caves, the inscriptions at the Jiangkou ensembles along the Min River show the progressive expansion of a multichambered cave following kin ramifications. The people implied include three generations of the Zhang family. The original patron of the cave appears to be the wife, Zhang Bingong, but a later intervention dated 77 CE, records the addition of a rock-cut coffin within the same cave by another member of the family, for the grandson Zhang Shuyuan.

維兮，本造此穿者，張賓公妻
子偉伯，伯妻孫陵在此右方曲內中

⁴² Xuan Chen 2015:42.

⁴³ Spurkland 2010:70.

Alas, [I], wife of Sir Zhang Bin, made this hole. The tomb of [Zhang Bin's] son Weibo, his son's wife, and his grandson lie in this space.⁴⁴

維兮，張偉伯子長仲以建初二年六月十三日與少子叔元俱下世，長子元益為之祖父穿中造內樓柱，作崖棺，葬父及弟叔元

Alas, Chang Zhong, son of Zhang Weibo, in the 2nd year of the Jianchu era, on the 13th day of the 6th month, with the youngest son Shuyuan all died. Yuanyi, son of Chang, for the benefit of his father, made a “pillar” (樓柱) in this chamber, and made a “cliff coffin” (崖棺), to bury his father and his younger brother Shuyuan.⁴⁵

In Taliangzi, one of the only Type 1 cave that is proved to belong to a high status official, inscriptions similarly cover three generations, the Wen family members being depicted on the wall, next to their names.⁴⁶ Even when undated, such filiations show consistency within multichambered caves not only in terms of time span but also in terms of users and function.⁴⁷ When in multichambered Type 1 caves, which usually belong to only one family name, cases are found where two families with different names share the same burial, the anomaly is taken as a sign of on-going sinicisation of local names.⁴⁸ As a result of the “failed colonisation” described in Chapter 2,⁴⁹ Han populations were a minority throughout the Southwest frontier until the early 18th century.⁵⁰ Due to this limited interaction extending for long time period, the population did not respond to a binary “intrusive group vs. indigenous groups” scheme, and we know that sinicized natives chieftains and large clans of indigenized Han immigrants (*daxing* 大姓) shared local power.⁵¹

If one realizes that the habit of inscribing cliffs in the Qi river area only covers 120 years, thus four generations, the scale of a familial enterprise constitutes a plausible temporal framework for small groups of Type 2 caves, just like for complex Type 1 caves with several chambers. However, when it comes to Type 2 single chamber caves south of the Yangzi, there is no example of repeated names within one site. Different

⁴⁴ Table B2.

⁴⁵ Table B3.

⁴⁶ Table B11 to B16.

⁴⁷ High-ranking official tombs provided with over ground structures, and with an occupation spanning more than a century, show a certain order in tomb alignment, such as elders first, later generations coming in later. Han Guohe 1999.

⁴⁸ Seen in two occurrences, in Mahao district 3 cave 99, and in Leshan Shuangtang district 1 cave 2. Tang Changshou 1993:81.

⁴⁹ Hervouet 1964:133 insists on the unchanged demography of the area in Han times.

⁵⁰ Giersch 2006:2.

⁵¹ Bin Yang 2009:104-5.

names are given for inscriptions on the same site, like in Baishulin or Qigedong,⁵² suggesting that the caves are individual enterprises, from different families, grouped on a single site. It is only more obvious with the niche-like caves present exclusively in Type 2 cemeteries, that burial practices south of the Yangzi allowed one to be buried alone. A group of Type 2 single cavities, although comparable in their temporal reach to a Type 1 multichambered cave, does not necessarily belong to the generations of a single family.

7.1.9. No official titles

We now know that kin relationships are mentioned in the inscriptions, but what about additions to personal names that indicate status, or a function within local administration? Even though we do not have complex social biographies, can we learn anything about the hierarchical structure of the groups who built these caves? A few terms present in the inscriptions seem to indicate social status (師,公,氏,士):

(1) *Shi* 師, like in the 133 CE Leipishi inscription, is commonly translated as “artisan master”.⁵³ Strangely, if Wang is here the artisan master, the patron or the deceased are not mentioned. Adding to it the size and clear structure of the inscription, and its conspicuous location on the door lintel (**Fig.7.5**), the hypothesis of a manufacturing mark should probably be abandoned, and *shi* 師 taken as an honorific suffix to the name, Wang.

陽嘉二年王師作墓四萬

In the 2nd year of the Yangxi era, Master Wang made this tomb [worth] 40,000 cash.⁵⁴

⁵² Table A1-6 and A23-35.

⁵³ Cook 1995:264.

⁵⁴ Table A21.



7.5. Inscribed lintel in Leipishi. Nanchuan district, Chongqing municipality. 97cm wide. 133 CE.

(2) *Shi* 士⁵⁵ too is not a specific title, but a “generic reference to the group dominant in government (and) society; (...) a non-hereditary, ill-defined class of bureaucrats among whom litterateurs were most highly esteemed”.⁵⁶ This class, fluid by definition,⁵⁷ gathers the readers, writers and circulators of texts, the *shi* 士 title conferring textual authority to its bearer.⁵⁸

(3) *Gong* 公⁵⁹ is not intended here as “duke”, but rather as “honourable”, a term expressing respect, used alone or as a suffix attached to a surname, comparable to *jun* 君.⁶⁰

(4) *Shi* 氏 appears three times, only in Qigedong.⁶¹ While it is also used as a suffix to many official titles, in this context it is more probably a suffix to a family name signifying “part of this family”. According to Luo Erhu, it might refer to a wealthier kin group or a

⁵⁵ Table A32.

⁵⁶ From entry no.5200 in Hucker 1985.

⁵⁷ Ebrey 1991:58-63. See detailed list of mourning duties of the *shi* 士 in Ebrey 1974:181-2.

⁵⁸ Connery 1998:98-103.

⁵⁹ Table A6, A43 and B2.

⁶⁰ From entry no.3388 in Hucker 1985.

⁶¹ Table A32 to A34.

clan.⁶² When placed as a suffix to two names, *shi* 氏 might also refer to a married woman, in an expression constructed as: “husband name + maiden name+氏”.

(5) The term *jushu* 具書⁶³ is concretely referring to the person who wrote the text in question. It is not even an equivalent to the scribe (史), which is still an unranked appellation, sometimes appended as a suffix to a title.⁶⁴

(6) Verbs succeeded by the *zhe* 者 particle are not titles but compounds indicating individuals who perform a specific action, such as “the one who excavated this tomb” (造此穿者).⁶⁵ Given the small size of our corpus, it is hard to determine if these are merely descriptive terms used on a single occasion or terms designating fixed roles in the construction of a burial.⁶⁶ A good example of this difficulty is the term *zhizhe* 知者, which I have translated in one occurrence as “the one who witnessed [the transaction]”,⁶⁷ and in another occurrence as “those who are aware”, as opposed to “those who are unaware” (*buzhizhe* 不知者).

李／黃是（氏）作此塚一門夏究苦知者為我直不知者奴

Dame Huang from the Li family made this single tomb, Xia Jiuku (?) the others recognize their own awareness, only I am left unaware.⁶⁸

In the same inscription, a term appears which is also used to designate a slave or a servant, *nu* 奴. In this occurrence, it may act as a depreciative term, rather than representing a social category. Interestingly, *nu* also appears in manufacturing marks from the Central Plains, where it is used by the stone mason to designate himself.⁶⁹ In other sources, such as the Pixian stele, the price of male and female slaves attached to the households is given, and in the Taliangzi inscription, different types of servants are cited: close followers, common servant, and external servants (侍奴/從奴/從小). Slavery was a legal status in early imperial China, as opposed to the category of commoners,⁷⁰ but it might have also been practiced among the south-western tribes.⁷¹

⁶² Luo Erhu 2005:293. He probably bases his argument on a Song source, the *Tongzhi* 通志, stating that “The wealthy have clans, the poor have only names” (貴者有氏，賤者有名無氏).

⁶³ Table A1.

⁶⁴ From entry no.5199 in Hucker 1985.

⁶⁵ Table B2.

⁶⁶ In Toraja, a house founder may be referred to as *to mangraruk* or *to umpabendan*, “the one who erected”, and the commissioner of a rock cut burial (*hang*) as *to pa’pa’na*, “the one who pierced”. In Waterson 1984:207.

⁶⁷ Table A46.

⁶⁸ Table A34.

⁶⁹ “I (nu 奴), Hao Jucheng, made this for the Hou family” (侯氏蒿聚成奴作) cited in Qin Zhen 2010:28.

⁷⁰ See Wilbur 1967.

The above-listed terms could be mistaken for titles, but none is a proper official title comparable to those mentioned in the Type 1 Taliangzi inscription.⁷² The names cited in the Type 2 cliff inscriptions most probably designate local actors such as farmers, merchants, soldiers, miners, indigenous leaders and petty officials who negotiated, traded, fought, and intermarried. The people recorded such inscriptions played no role in the imperial administration, and do not appear in the transmitted Dynastic Histories, far away from our local concerns.⁷³

7.1.10. Place names and ethnonyms

Despite the strong presence of the caves in the landscape, place names are absent from Type 2 inscriptions south of the Yangzi, be it of the locality where the tomb was built, or the place of origin of the people involved. Unlike funerary monuments such as *que* 阙 gates, or non-funerary stelae, where place names corresponding to the transmitted Administrative Geography Treatises appear,⁷⁴ inscriptions south of the Yangzi only once mention a village or domain name (大敦庄).⁷⁵ This information might have been self-evident to the makers, who inhabited the area. Or else the locations had not been named yet by the Imperial administration, or they corresponded to a name in a local idiom that would not have been translated in Han script.⁷⁶

The only occurrence of a population name is again in a Type 1 burial, on the Taliangzi wall painting,⁷⁷ which mentions the north-western frontier struggles against the Qiang 羌.⁷⁸ The painted carving under the characters *Xiang* people (襄人) is illustrated below, showing a row of bearded figures with pointed hats and long sleeved tuniques (**Fig.7.6**).

⁷¹ Hervouet (1964:80 and 125) notices several mentions of “young Bo slaves” (*bo tong* 樊童) being traded (See Timeline 5 and Timeline 20 for mentions of “young Bo slaves” (*bo tong* 樊童) in historical documents). Slavery is known among the Nuosu, a branch of the Yi. Wu Gu (2001:29-30) considers it as a major motivation feeding the Yi tribes’ “culture of migration”: younger brothers who want to avoid slavery having to pioneer a new area to establish their own branch, divided from the main lineage. This is a major argument against the idea of egalitarian highland societies proposed by Scott.

⁷² Refer to Table B11 to 16.

⁷³ Ebrey 1980:325.

⁷⁴ On *que* 阙 and stelae of the Sichuan plain such as the 97 CE Luzhou Museum inscribed pillar, which mentions known administrative units such as Jiangyang 江阳 county in the Qianwei commandery.

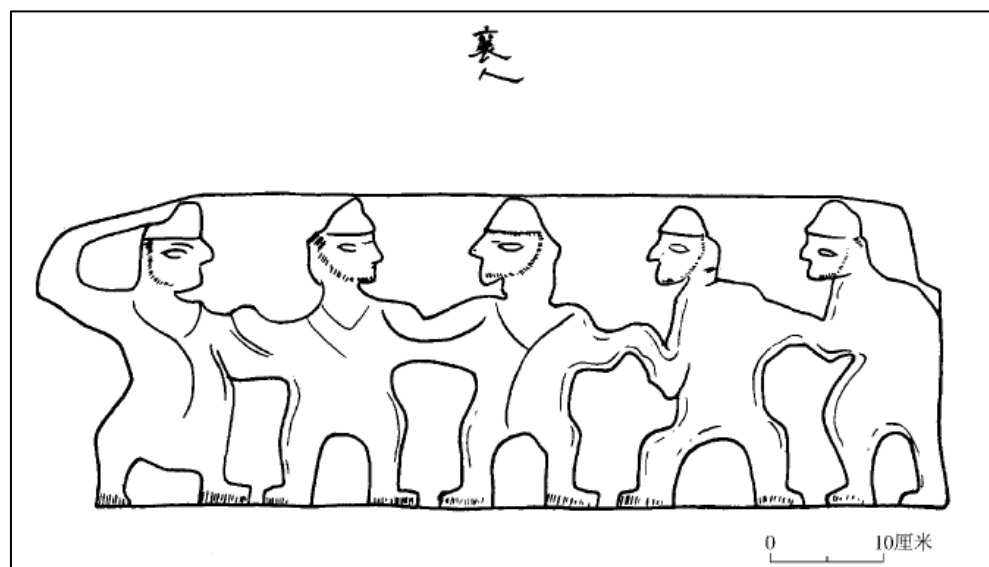
⁷⁵ Table A43.

⁷⁶ Scott 2009:241.

⁷⁷ Table B11 and Taliangzi 2008:57-61. see also articles by Wang Zijin and Gao Dalun 2004; Zhao Ruimin 2009; Huo Wei 2009.

⁷⁸ Zhao Ruimin 2009:86.

The theme of dancing figures holding hands, is recurrent in iconography, as well as in transmitted texts,⁷⁹ the figures are thus not necessarily portraying a specific population. A longer inscription attached also tells us that the deceased is the descendant of a successful Chamberlain who led campaigns against the Qiang, one of the south-western tribes.⁸⁰ The combination of an exonym with a generic representation of “barbarians” suggests that the depiction acts as the commemoration of a military achievement.⁸¹ A similar scene is found twice south of the Yangzi, in two adjacent Type 2 tombs of the Erdengyan cemetery (**Fig.7.7**).⁸² Three different types of hairdo are worn here, a flat hat for the flute player, pointed hats for the first and last figure in the row of dancers and no hats for the other dancers, among which one wears trousers while the others wear straight dresses and has been interpreted as a “self-portrait” by local groups. The depiction is a curious mixture of stereotypical representations of “barbarians” with their pointed hat and playing the flute, as they are often found under the shape of clay figurines in Type 1 caves of the Sichuan basin, and representations of individuals with unfamiliar hairdo and dresses.



7.6. Xiang 襄 written over dancing figures in Taliangzi M3. Santai county, Sichuan province. 80cm w. Source: Fig.11 in Huo Wei 2009:70.

⁷⁹ References for the famous “Ba dance” (*Bayu wu* 巴渝舞) in a military context are found in the Hua Yang Guo Zhi 1984, Juan 1:37-38. See Lung 2006:234-5, for a translation and commentary of the three Bailang poems, dedicated by the south-western tribes to the emperor, where dancing performances are presented as a form of tribute.

⁸⁰ Table B11.

⁸¹ Huo Wei ties the depiction with campaigns against the Qiang in 107, 118, 139 and 145 CE reported in the Hou Hanshu Commentary on the Western Qiang (*Xi Qiang zhuan* 西羌傳). Huo Wei 2009:69.

⁸² See also 6.3.3.2 and 6.3.3.3 in appendix to Chapter 8 : Catalogue of depictions.



7.7. Dancing figures in Erdengyan. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. 130cm w.

When looking at the Taliangzi wall painting and the Erdengyan carving side by side, it seems that the theme of dancing barbarians holding hands has been repeated, with the addition of local elements, perhaps descriptive of the groups inhabiting the area. Rather than a self-portrait by local groups, the depiction looks more like it is extending the definition of “barbarians” to include other characters, possibly local ones.

7.1.11. Alternative scripts

Textual documents found in a funerary context are reputed to possess a material dimension which adds metaphorical meaning to their factual content. Most classifications of funerary texts mostly follow the first attempt by Seidel, who distinguished four categories in Han tomb texts.⁸³ These categories are not mutually exclusive and the content of the inscription can combine different levels of language, real facts and metaphorical meaning.

- The first category, the land contract (*di quan* 地券), was already discussed above.
- The second category groups all documents to ward off evil (*zhenmu wen* 镇墓文). As mimicry of a bureaucratic, official document, they announce the entry of the deceased into the underworld, thus transferring them from the registers of the living to that of the dead.⁸⁴ They predate the appearance of an organized Taoist church, and gradually disappear with the increased religious function of grave contracts.

⁸³ Seidel 1987:24-7.

⁸⁴ Dien 1995:56.

- The third type of text found in a funerary context is the “Inventory of grave goods” (*yiwu quan* 衣物券).⁸⁵ This descriptive list of the goods deposited in the grave, establishes a one-to-one correspondence between the word and the item.⁸⁶ This is also the oldest type of document: the Western Han examples are so accurate that they might have acted as cover notes for tomb inventories, but later examples act as a replacement for virtual grave goods.
- The fourth category are the *fu* (符), ink-written or carved symbols, which are often attached to a textual document.

An unusual character compound found among the inscriptions and carved depictions in Qigedong was interpreted as a Taoist *fu* (道符).⁸⁷ Enclosed in a house-shaped assemblage of the characters man (人) and door (門), are the characters to see (見) and *lou* 婁,⁸⁸ alternatively translated as building/tower (*lou* 樓), wife (妻) or “to carve” (*lei* 𠂔, in fact 𠂔) (**Fig.7.8**).⁸⁹ Because of it being unreadable and composite, juxtaposed with graphic symbols such as endless knots and located close by the mention of a “heavenly gate” (天門), the character was associated to early Taoist religious practice. Similarly, Wu Hung suggested that Taoist movements were responsible for the production a different type of funerary art in Type 1 tombs in the Sichuan basin, pointing at iconographic elements such as the Queen Mother of the West and figures he interprets as Taoist priests or practitioners.⁹⁰ As we will see in the next chapter however, direct references to the Queen Mother of the West are almost absent from Type 2 caves. More importantly, “common religious practice” in Han times predates any date for the historical foundation of a Taoist church with a functioning ideological system.⁹¹ As mentioned in Chapter 2, religious movements active in late Han Southwest China integrated migrant and indigenous population, established their own territorial divisions, trade relays, census and taxes, but they did not last more than a few decades.

⁸⁵ For other denominations see Friedrich 2013:7.

⁸⁶ Goody 1977:84-6 considers the list as the most widespread early form of text.

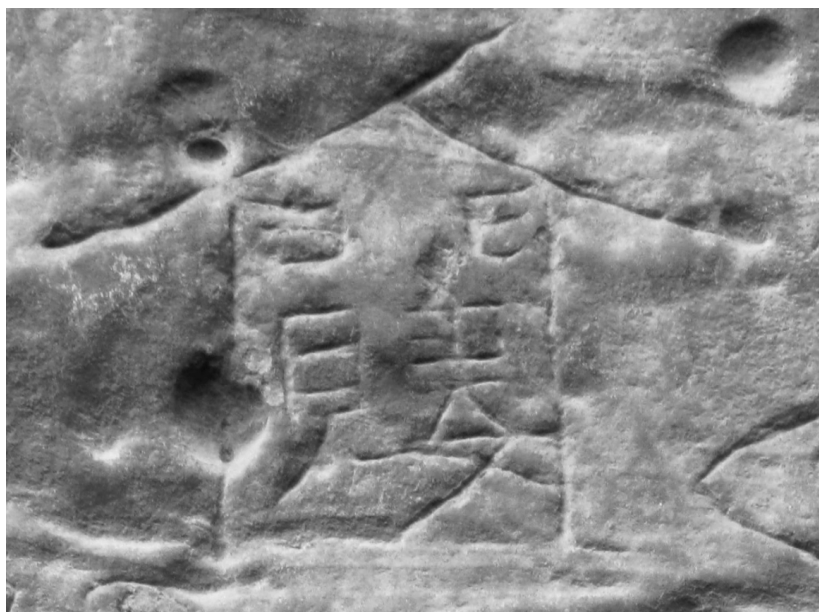
⁸⁷ Luo Weixian 1989:8-12.

⁸⁸ Table A24.

⁸⁹ *Lou* 婁 also appears in the Sanchahe inscription (Table A47 and Translation note A47).

⁹⁰ Wu Hung 2000:77-94.

⁹¹ Seidel 1980:27. See also Wang Yucheng 1991:45–56.



7.8. Symbol in Qigedong. Changning county, Sichuan province. 122-178 CE. 35cm w.

Qigedong is not the only occurrence of an architecture-like, unreadable graph in Type 2 caves. In Songlingang (215 CE), the back wall of a niche-like cave is divided in compartments by three symmetric graphs which upper part resembles a *dougong* bracket set, as seen in Chadian in the previous chapter, but which overall mimics the appearance of Chinese characters (**Fig.7.9** and see **Fig.5.30**).



7.9. Graph on back wall of a niche-like cave in Songlingang. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. 215 CE. 60cm h.

From only two occurrences, one can hardly infer a tradition of altered script. However, we can go further than just considering those as irregular word compounds due to a low level of literacy. Reder suggests that in intermediary stages of literacy “people who cannot read and write nevertheless participate in complex literacy practices”.⁹² Scott goes further by considering the type of fragmentary text, restricted literacy and magical spells practiced by hill groups as a conscious divorce from the administrative structure, in other words, a “strategic loss of literacy”.⁹³ A form of resistance, the partial use of text is a purposeful attempt at keeping it polysemic. Indeed, Scott draws an equation between literacy and state making, citing cadastres, taxation and census as the main task of a minority of literate locals.

An example of partial literacy by the hill groups of Southwest China is Yi writing. Here, the scribes (*bimo*) are the ones to detain ritual knowledge, but they are not allowed to leave their village.⁹⁴ Script is thus tightly connected to the territory, scriptural traditions are hyper localized and become a cohesive factor for the local groups who experience it. In the purposeful manipulation of script and the selective adoption of literacy, we see tools for the assertion of local identities. As we will see in the next subsection, however, not all imperfections in Type 2 inscriptions are attributable to deliberate cultural choices.

7.1.12. Craft specialisation and literacy

Differences in the quality of epigraphy are commonly attributed to social status or cultural affiliation. The classification of cliff inscriptions attempted by Tang Changshou on the Leshan ensembles recognizes three types of epigraphy: the coarser (雄浑) ones, he associates with “prisoner bricks” found in Luoyang, written by low grade officials, the ones in clerical style (纵肆) he assigns to local scribes; and the rectilinear (方正) ones he assigns to higher officials.⁹⁵ Compared to inscriptions responding to the imperial standard of clerical script, Ma Wei considers Type 2 inscriptions as popular calligraphy.⁹⁶ The distinctions proposed by the two authors are not mere formal

⁹² Reder 1994:46.

⁹³ Scott 2009:225-6.

⁹⁴ Névot 2008:91.

⁹⁵ Tang Changshou 1993:83.

⁹⁶ Ma Wei 2012:168.

classifications since political and cultural identities are associated with script types. Following this logic, the Type 2 inscriptions would be produced by low grade officials in remote areas and they speak of the lack or avoidance of certain canons, perhaps resulting from a poor exposure to models. Rather than stone stelae carved in clerical style, indeed, available types of written documents on the frontier were most probably short-lived communications on wooden strips.⁹⁷

Apart from calligraphic style, however, the content of the inscriptions suggests a non-scribal type of literacy, or craftsmen's literacy. In addition to the restricted pool of characters reviewed above, the writers only mastered a little pool of formulas such as: "to benefit the descendants" (宜子孙), "favour lasting through the ages" (萬世恩),⁹⁸ or "to the full awareness of the common people" (百姓明知也).⁹⁹ Literate craftsman able to carve characters may not have been a common resource south of the Yangzi, but evidence for specialized carving skills is provided in Type 1 burials. Two stelae were found outside the study area: the "Stele of Zhaoyi" (趙儀碑)¹⁰⁰ and the "Stele of Lord Fan from Ba Commandery" (漢巴郡太守樊君碑) dated 205 CE. Both mention the same carver (石工), Liu Sheng 刘盛, distinguishing him from the scribe who composed (書) the inscription, Xi Zao 息燥.¹⁰¹

A closer look at the inscriptions shows in script type can be related to formats, carving technique and skills. Steles, funerary pillars in assembled stone erected above shaft tombs (*que* 闕) and tomb doors are moveable supports which feature balanced compositions in well-planned columns, in a recognizable clerical style with elongated final strokes, witnessing the on-going standardisation of script in Han times. On such stone slabs, abrasion devices produce strokes' extremities of progressive depth, and the flat chisel is preferred, recognizable by the strokes' broken curves, as we can observe on a stone slab dated 101 CE (**Fig.7.10**).¹⁰² Just like coffins, such inscribed stone slabs are quarried items of finer material than the rock-cut spaces they were moved into, and the stones were probably processed in professional workshops.

⁹⁷ Connery 1998:67.

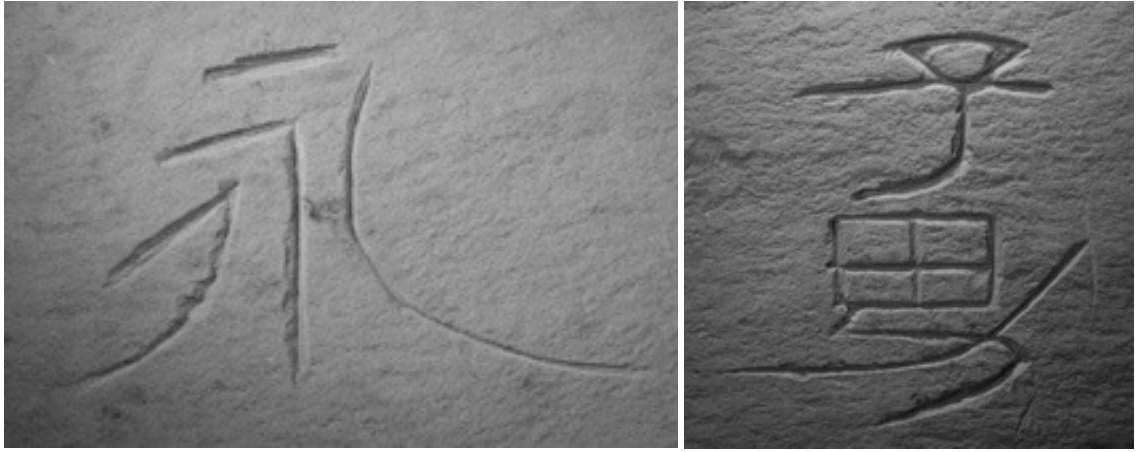
⁹⁸ Table A31.

⁹⁹ Table A42.

¹⁰⁰ Qin Zhen 2010:29.

¹⁰¹ Table B6. A third inscription on the coffin of Wang Hui 王暉 (Refer to Table B5) was attributed to the same Liu Sheng by Ren Naiqiang. Cited by Qin Zhen 2005:29.

¹⁰² Table A16.



7.10. Details of an inscribed stone slab (possibly a door) kept in the Hejiang Museum, Sichuan province. 101 CE. Character height 15-20cm.

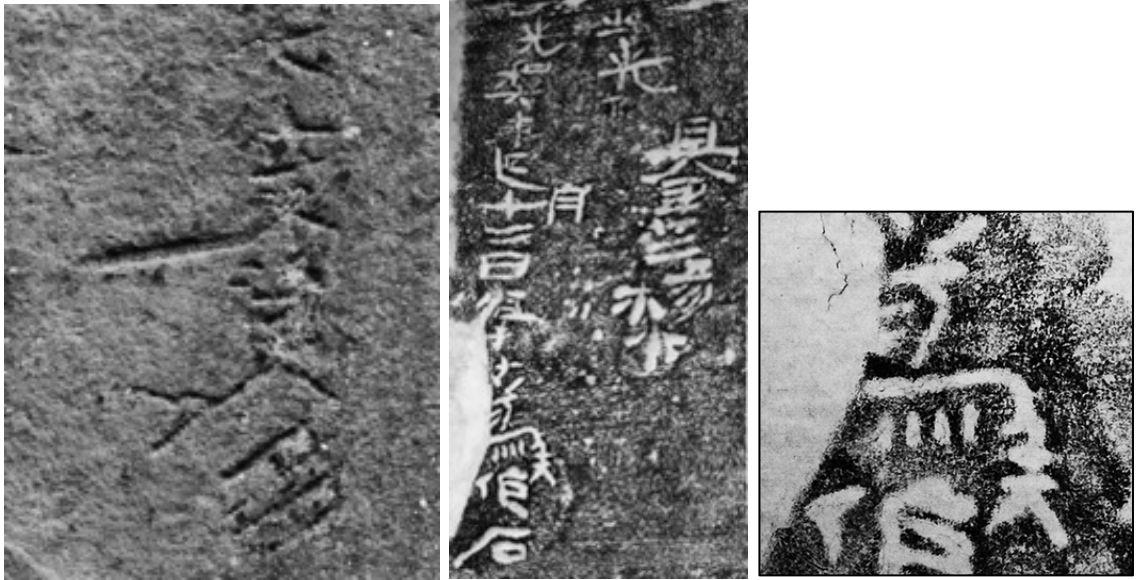
Conversely, for outdoor Type 2 cliff inscriptions, the punch and mallet produce a clumsier version of the clerical script elongated tails (**Fig.7.11**). In Baishulin, no preparatory calligraphy seems to have preceded the inscription, which was directly engraved on the sandstone cliff.

光和六年四月十二日口口為夫作石/具書楊

In the 6th year of the Guanghe era, on the 12th day of the 4th month, (...) made a stone [cave] for her husband. Written by Yang.¹⁰³

The first character 光 was repeated three times, adding to the general irregular layout of the inscription, and a forgotten 月 character is added at the right of the column (**Fig.7.12**). Also, the 夫 character was added to the 為 character's right leg, almost making a visual compound of the dedicatory expression "for her husband" (為夫). In this case, the writer (具書) and the carver may be the same person, without the need for a written model or a preparatory tracing.

¹⁰³ Table A1.



7.11. Elongated left leg of the characters 交/父 and 赏 in the 口赏多石 inscription, Shuanghetang. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. 181 CE. Character height 5-15cm.

7.12. Rubbing and detail of the inscription in Baishulin M1. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. 141 CE. Character height 5-15cm. Source: Fig.3 in Ma Wei 2012:167.

The comparison between quarried, moveable supports found in Type 1 caves and the cliff inscriptions associated with Type 2 caves suggests that workshops of specialized production may have been active contemporaneously with a more localized type of production. When taken as a record of carving gestures in their own right, the inscriptions show evidence for different dynamics of production, with minor planning in the execution of cliff caves but not for quarried stone items. This re-joins our observation made in the next chapter that quarried stone coffins show a higher degree of standardization in motifs compared to the unruly outdoor depictions.

7.1.13. Experimental epigraphy

As part of the experiment in replicating a cave reported in the previous Chapter 6, one stone mason, Master He, was asked to engrave an inscription on the cliff face. The mason was illiterate and at first refused to carve the inscription, feeling uncomfortable to display his “lack of education”. He advised me to look for masons specialised in epigraphic carvings, who are literate and have experience in carving text. He described how they would flatten the stone first and use sharper tools, to obtain clean strokes without their contour chipping off. From the photographs I shared with him, however, Master He could see that the epigraphic inscriptions south of the Yangzi did not demonstrate a high level of literacy or a command in contemporaneous calligraphic

style, neither did they show exceptional dexterity and planning in the way they were carved on the unworked cliff face. These observations constituted a convincing argument against the use of specialized craftsmen. For Master He to be able to trace the characters, each character had to be written on a A5 paper, and the paper held close to his eyes and to the cliff face, in order for him to be able to check the model at each stroke (**Fig.7.13**). While copying the inscription that I wrote for him on paper, Master He adapted the cursive shapes to the possibilities of his chisel. This was the same chisel he had used to quarry the stone and cut the cave: curved shapes were squared, horizontal strokes were elongated, and several characters were heavily simplified. The resulting carving style was very close to the Type 2 inscriptions. Another point in common with the Eastern Han inscriptions were homophones such as the character for “ten” (十, pronounced *shi*) being mistakenly replaced by the masons by the character for “stone” (石, also pronounced *shi*).



7.13. Horizontal stroke, elongation, simplification in the inscription in Experiment no.1. June 2015.

The text of the first inscription, carved on the cliff immediately adjacent to the cave opening in Experiment 1, was modelled after epigraphic inscriptions found next to Eastern Han caves, which usually contain the date of execution (commonly expressed in traditional calendar year), the name of the patron (in this case, the researcher, i.e. myself), the name of the mason, the amount of money invested in the building project, as well as propitiatory formulas. The inscription reads:

乙未端午前三日，西元二零一五年六月十八日魏離雅作
為實驗考古復原東漢崖墓兩層門楣
四日成每日工錢三百元公用共賀八個石匠賀氏付氏

On *yiwei* (乙未),¹⁰⁴ three days before the *duanwu* festival (端午),¹⁰⁵ on the 18th of June 2015 of the Western Calendar, Lia Wei made (this cave). The two-layered recessed doorframe of an Eastern Han cave was reproduced for Experimental Archaeology. (The cave) was finished in four days, took eight working days of 300 RMB each, (and was executed) by the stone masons Master He and Master Fu.

Most of the vocabulary used in the inscription was familiar to the mason, given that it referred to terms often used in his profession, and he was able to read part of it, although unable to write it without assistance. The traditional use of heavenly stems and earthly branches to spell the date rather than a numeric date (see footnotes 113-114), as well as the terms “experimental archaeology” (試驗考古) and “reproduction” (復原) were beyond his level of literacy. It seemed that apart from the numerical date (numbers from 1 to 10, day 日 and month 月), the words for work (工), stone (石), and his own family name He (賀), which he carved in bigger size and better calligraphy than all other characters, all other characters were part of his passive knowledge of the script.

7.2. Summary: Inscriptions south of the Yangzi

The epigraphy found south of the Yangzi, as compared to its counterpart in the Sichuan plain, is formulaic, line-carved, and sometimes barely readable, although placed outside the tomb and thus supposedly visible. The script is clumsy, not

¹⁰⁴ 乙 *Yi* is the 2nd heavenly stem and 未 *Wei* is the 8th earthly branch. The combination of 10 heavenly stems and 12 earthly branches produces the sexagenarian cycle (干支 *ganzhi*), basis for the traditional Chinese calendar system.

¹⁰⁵ The *duanwu* festival, also called Dragon Boat festival is a traditional holiday occurring on the 5th day of the 5th month of the lunar calendar, around the time of the solar solstice.

following a calligraphic style, with phonetic loans and invented characters. No fully literate person was required to carve such inscriptions and the audience for such inscriptions was not a highly-educated audience. As no official title or rank is cited in the inscriptions, local groups might have responded to another type of social differentiation. The inscriptions say nothing of the owner of the cave, simply stating his or her name and the amount of money invested in the tomb. The analysis above led on to the textual content and shape of the 50 inscriptions associated with man-made caves south of the Yangzi, in comparison to inscriptions found in Type 1 caves or moveable supports from the Sichuan basin, provide us with a set of fundamental observations:

- Most inscriptions record individual names on outdoor cliffs, suggesting a negotiation between private spheres of expression.
- For single cavity caves in the Qi River, the actors are only referred to within kin relationships or by honorific titles, without any mention of official titles or specialized individuals, suggesting a private type of production, perhaps domestic.
- Although they do not narrate the lives of the mentioned people, the inscriptions played either a contractual or a dedicatory role in the cave-making process, possibly involving the cave-makers, patrons and deceased, keeping in mind that some of these roles could be combined into a single agent.
- a limited pool of characters mostly referring to the stone working activity itself and a clumsy execution by epigraphic standards of the time, suggest that the function of inscriptions south of the Yangzi exist somewhere between craftsmen marks and proper epitaphs.

The observations made in this chapter prepare the ground for the investigation on carved depictions in Type 2 caves conducted in the next chapter. Several carved motifs found in Type 2 caves also appear in Type 1 caves. Stylistic and iconographical borrowing come in to nuance the apparent homogeneity of Type 2 caves and further investigate the legacy of Type 1 traditions.

8. Comparative study of depictions in Type 1 and Type 2 burial caves

This chapter compares the carvings found in Type 2 caves south of the Yangzi to depictions found in Type 1 Sichuanese cliff tombs, to map the workings of cultural exchange as reflected by stone working traditions. Carvings found on the southwest frontier and in the imperial province resonate with the wider repertoire of Eastern Han funerary inscriptions and pictorial carvings. Known as “Han Pictorial Stones” (*Han huaxiang shi* 漢畫像石), the latter have been the object of continuous study from medieval antiquarians to current Chinese art history and archaeology. The first section revisits the legacies of this long interpretative tradition, pointing out both its contributions and its shortcomings with regard to the study of Type 2 depictions.

In the caves south of the Yangzi, considerable variation of motifs discourages attempts at easy typology, and cries out for attention to dynamic trends. Descriptive modern categories risk back-projecting modern interests that may not reflect the concerns of the maker. Moreover, technical categories are risky to determine because of the simplicity of the procedures, a situation often encountered in the study of rock art.¹ Rather than providing easy fixed categories, the hybrid images found south of the Yangzi capture “moments” of culture contact and culture change, and allow one to address the problem of cultural borrowing. For the above-mentioned reasons, the figures provided in the text are for mean to assist with this comparative purpose, while all the documented depictions found south of the Yangzi are delivered as a dataset in the appendices.

The following sections investigate the carved imagery visible inside and outside Type 2 caves, as compared to Type 1 caves and Han tombs in general. Carvings added on the outdoor cliffs, on the recessed doorframes, and on Type 2 caves’ inner walls and ceilings, can be dissociated from the cutting sequence of a cave. They include depictions and epigraphic inscriptions, the latter having been addressed in the previous chapter. Because of the small number of depictions currently known in the area, the majority of which were discovered as part of my survey and documented here for the first time, the approach remains qualitative. Surveyed examples

¹ Bednarik 2001.

considerably augment the few known figures previously thought of as one-offs, and allow us to build a repertoire. The following discussion addresses architectural elements that have a structuring role in the funerary space, and also continues a focus on spatial distributions at the scale of single cemetery sites. Moving on from the physical landscape, the last section of this chapter introduces one final set of interesting evidence for an otherworldly landscape, evoked through a series of clay models representing the imaginary abode of the Queen Mother of the West.

An appendix to Chapter 8 is structured in two parts: a table that lists 133 depictions found south of the Yangzi (“11.5. Depictions table”), and a catalogue illustrating part of the dataset divided in sections by type of motif (“11.6. Depictions catalogue”). Depictions that are not included in the main text of Chapter 8 are hereafter referred to as “Catalogue + section or entry number”.

8.1. An outsider view on Eastern Han funerary art

As it has been discussed in Chapter 2, “Han funerary art” is not a static cultural marker which can be used to determine the ethnic identity of its makers or users. Rather, it is a system of representation which is here revisited from the point of view of cultural expressions located on its periphery. Funerary carvings south of the Yangzi appear as multivalent, opportunistic solutions resorted to in a situation of cultural negotiation.

8.1.1. What is a “Han Pictorial Stone”?

A re-evaluation of the terminology applied to depictions in Eastern Han funerary art should start with the very concept of “Han pictorial stones”. The term “pictorial stone” (*huaxiang* 畫像, literally “figure drawing”) was first used by Song-period scholar Zhao Mincheng (趙明誠; 1081-1129 CE) to describe the Wu Liang shrine carvings on limestone.² Its use was then extended to “all the stones that can be rubbed” (i.e. low relief or line-carved depictions),³ be it on stele, pillas, shrines, burial chambers, etc., from the Han to the Wei-Jin dynasties (4th century CE). Some of the most recent attempts at cataloguing pictorial stones have replaced rubbings by photography and automated line drawings, but the focus remains on duplication techniques of the final

² *Jinshi lu* 2005:331.

³ Even pictorial bricks are included therein, although these are not carved in stone, but printed from a carved mould. Yang Boda 1987:3.

carved product.⁴ In Li Falin's early attempt at chronological classification, he suggests a historical evolution of carving techniques from flat to high relief. **(Fig.8.1)** While in the 1980s he was clearly suggesting that line carving was an "indigenous" practice, twenty years later Li notes that rather than obeying a chronological order, categories of carving respond to a technological progression. Two basic processes, line carving and relief, correspond to different stages in the carving sequence.⁵ The sequence starts with the essential step of dressing the surface, which as we will see for the caves' indoor space, produces a patterned grid which plays a visually structuring role.

1	Line carving/ Intaglio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dressing or left undressed • Outline
2	flat low relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dressing or left undressed • Outline • Hollowing out the background
3	bulging low relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dressing or left undressed • Outline • deeper background • Rounding the figures' edges • Line carved details on the bulging shape
4	sunken low relief on a flat surface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dressing • Outline • Hollowing out the figures' inside • Line carved details on the sunken shape
5	sunken relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above, but deeper
6	high relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rough dressing • Rough outline • Chiseling out the background and sides of the figure
7	see-through relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above, • But holes are drilled between figures to obtain a transparent background
8	"bulging lines" carving. (incl. printed patterns on bricks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dressing • Double outline • Excavating everything but the line

8.1. Li Falin's classification of pictorial stones. Source: Li Falin 1965:199-200 and 203.

Equally concerned by cultural evolution, Yang Boda looks for indigenous terminologies in the writings of 6th to 12th century antiquarians.⁶ He prefers the terms "hidden bulge" (*yinqi* 隱起) and "sudden rise" (*tuqi* 起突) to the terms high and low relief, which he considers a "western import".⁷ Just like Li Falin, however, he places the two main stone-working categories of "engraved painting" (*kehua* 刻畫) and "hidden bulge" (*yinqi* 隱起), thus line carving and low relief, in an evolutionary sequence.



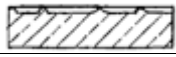


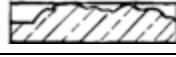
⁴ See Zhu Qinsheng 2011:403-9.

⁵ Li Falin 1989:90-2.

⁶ 6th century *Shuijing zhu* 水經注 by Li Daoyuan 酈道元, 1100 CE *Yingzao fashi* 營造法式 by Li Jie 李誠, 1129 CE *Jinshi lu* 金石錄 by Zhao Mincheng 趙明誠, and 1166 CE *Lishi* 隸釋 by Hongshi 洪適.

⁷ Yang Boda 1987:5. The terms are placed by Li Jie in a progression by order of relief: "雕鏤制度有四等, 一日剔地起突, 二日壓地隱起華, 三日減地平釵, 四日素平". *Yingzao fashi* 2006:21. Pelliot also notices these terms in the description of relief by Chinese scholars. Pelliot 1924.

Unsurprisingly, line carving dominates in the early stage, high relief appearing only in the last stage. **(Fig.8.2)**

1	陰線刻	Intaglio/line carving		Early stage	100 BCE-0 CE
2	凹象刻	Sunken relief		Middle stage	from 0 CE
3	陽線刻	Relief line carving			
4	平凸刻	Flat relief			
5	隱起刻	"Hidden Bulge" (Low relief)			
6	起突刻	"Sudden rise" (High relief)		Late stage	150-200 CE

8.2. Yang Boda's classification of pictorial stones. Source: Yang Boda 1987:5.

Two categories were added by Luo Erhu to describe Sichuanese pictorial stones : "half-sculpture" and sculpture in the round **(Fig.8.3)**. In his classification, the categories of high relief and "half-sculpture" are only differentiated by a few centimetres deep, a quantitative difference whose relevance is questionable. More importantly, sculpture in the round also includes sitting animal figures cut out from corners or as bases for central pillars, thus not necessarily free-standing but sometimes requiring the use of a drill. This classification mixes pillars in assembled stone blocks with rock-cut carvings, two distinct technical processes.

1	"bidimensional" line-carving	
2	concave figures	
3	flat relief	0,5--1cm
4	relief	0,5—4cm
5	high relief	3—10cm
6	"half-sculpture"	10-20cm
7	Sculpture in the round	+ use of the drill

8.3. Luo Erhu's classification of pictorial stones. Source: Luo Erhu 2001:65-6.

The Chinese scholars' perception of three-dimensional representation as an indicator of cultural evolution resonates with the pace of Western Art History. In the latter's linear "conquest of space", progressive steps lead from relief to sculpture in the round. The ideal lies with the Classic Greek sculptor, who attacked the chunk of rock with a punch simultaneously from all four sides.⁸ Early Greek soft limestone (*poros*) sculpture is still reputedly too close to woodcarving techniques and disregarded.⁹ In moments of assumed decadence, such as in the Late Roman Empire, sculpted figures fall back into rigid, "archaic" compositions isolated by harsh outlines. Little value is ascribed to the

⁸ Bluemel (1927) 1955:43.

⁹ Casson 1933:83.

flat chisel, which is associated either with early line carving or with late mass-produced low relief.¹⁰ Instead, art historical works display a fascination for hard stone and slow abrasion processes and holistic approaches. By contrast with the Greek model, Ashton defines Chinese sculpture as more concerned with outlines: modelling is conveyed by subtle curves rather than anatomical knowledge. Interestingly, because of its mastery in rendering volumes, Sichuanese sandstone sculpture “does not represent an entirely Chinese form of the art” to him.¹¹ When it gets to monumental sculpture, Ashton notices an overall neglect for details, as if the works were only meant for a distant observer.¹² A comparable “lack of care” is reproached for Indian rock-cut sculpture.¹³ As it appears from unfinished figures in rock-cut temples, the carvers aiming at cutting a sculpture out of the living rock begin the work from a chiselled outline, as they would do to excavate a rock-cut space. **(Fig.8.4)** This is where the sculpted figure gains its strong outlines and dynamism,¹⁴ again suggesting a continuity between rock-cut carving traditions and the visual qualities of sculpture. Intermediary forms, constantly struggling between 2D and 3D, are frequently encountered in rock-cut sculpture.



8.4. Unfinished image in Baodingshan. Dazu county, Chongqing municipality. 9th-10th century CE.

¹⁰ Casson 1933:92.

¹¹ Ashton 1934:133.

¹² Ashton 1934:132.

¹³ Williams 1986:99.

¹⁴ Williams 1986:100.

Interpretative traditions reviewed above associate cultural belonging and the notion of progress with certain techniques, or in this case, degrees of relief. While classical art history focuses on the conquest of the third dimension, Chinese scholars are concerned with building their own set of values. Marginal expressions in geographic or temporal terms such as Sichuanese rock-cut caves or Late Roman sculpture, challenge attempts on both sides to provide static visual identities.

8.1.2. Rhetoric, text and status in Han funerary art

Despite their technical and stylistic distinctiveness noted in the previous subsection, rock-cut caves in the Sichuan region have been addressed mainly within a canonical discourse about Han funerary art, whose main tenets are drawn from Han tombs found in the Central Plains. As a consequence, carvings are first treated as a pictorial language to be decoded. The explanatory pressure faced by Han funerary art is only nuanced by geographical or social distinctions of its cosmopolitan, provincial and local expressions.

Existing interpretative approaches attribute normative meaning to the images. Based on their composition and iconographical content, they identify rhetorical strategies promoting specific political, social and religious models. Stone carvings from Han burials in the Central Plains (present day Henan and Shandong provinces) are seen as the epitome for a Confucian “classical” tradition of tomb art, saturated with literary references.¹⁵ In this understanding, Han funerary art is a rhetorical device serving the state, or a powerful clan. Single motifs serve as rhetorical tools in specific contexts. In the discipline of art history, all-encompassing interpretations attributing images to specific literary facts have been first criticized by Aby Warburg and his followers back in the years 1940-50.¹⁶ Instead of coding and decoding iconography, they chose to contextualize and historicize the significance of symbols, seized their evolution and acknowledged changes in meaning. Similarly, in the study of Han funerary art, regional and sub-regional studies have nuanced the Central Plain model. Powers for example, distinguishes the imagery on engraved stone-slabs produced by the Confucian literati, from a more “descriptive” and “opulent” tradition of pictorial production found in

¹⁵ Powers 1981 and Wu Hung 1989.

¹⁶ Crossley 1988:116.

brick or stone tombs associated with eunuchs, merchants and nouveaux riches. In the latter's ornate style, because of its prevailing visual logic, art historians have attempted to identify a narration within the images.¹⁷ More ambitious and speculative works have contributed to project religious ideals into material culture, such as the idea of Heaven.¹⁸ Equally speculative is Wu Hung's work on the iconography of Sichuanese cliff tombs, where he looks for specific motifs to relate with beliefs supposedly active in the time period and area. Specifically addressing the rock-cut caves in northern Sichuan, Erickson uses Harper's translations of manuscripts found in Western Han tombs such as Shuihudi and Mawangdui, to identify demonic figures and sexual practices represented in Sichuanese rock-cut tombs.¹⁹ The latter's geographically and historically circumscribed approach has the merit of looking for alternative textual sources, such as excavated manuscripts and charts.

A certain degree of economic and political autonomy is recognized for the Sichuan area, rich tombs being attributed to powerful local families, with the Chengdu plain and the Min River basin as focal centres. The main motivation behind pictorial programmes, however, remains emulation. Grave goods, depictions and architectural structure are addressed as the production of a local elite referring to their counterpart in the Han funerary customs of the Central Plains.²⁰ Specific spatial arrangements are attributed to the quest for an ideal order, as in Powers' study of the Shandong pictorial stones. Powers goes so far as to ascribe symmetry, stylization, stiffness, and the use of a "striated background" to a shift in cosmological beliefs.²¹ Reiterating Power's exercise in Sichuan, Mengoni recognizes the representational conventions of an imperial structured cosmos in the iconographic composition on quarried stone coffins of the metropolitan elite.²² Conversely, she attributes formal characteristics such as the scattering of "auspicious" motifs, as well as the visibility of monumental rock-cut façades and vestibules, to the rejection of Confucian ideology by local clans in search of legitimation. The spectacular production of these powerful families recall the "opulent" tombs of the nouveaux riches identified by Powers for the Central Plains.

¹⁷ Powers 1981 and Wang 1994 cited in Thompson 1999.

¹⁸ Tseng 2011.

¹⁹ Erickson 2003.

²⁰ Mengoni 2003.

²¹ Powers 1981:29 and 32-3.

²² Mengoni 2003:146-9.

Studies of regional elite burials in Han period Sichuan mostly reflect the normative interpretation of the Central Plains model, despite the variety of burial customs at hand. Identities are defined in terms of social status, as funerary rites are considered as public events. At a smaller scale, funerary identities are seen as providers of continuity for the private sphere.

8.1.3. Multivalent images, omens, ordinary images and the double style.

As compared to the studies reviewed above, research on commoners' burials in a provincial context introduce a dynamic view of material culture, where depictions become tools for local negotiation. Rather than detecting a strict iconographic programme or attributing meaning to specific motifs, the analysis presented here attempts to catch up with other works on the "multivalence" of images but applies it to a frontier socio-historical context.²³ Tseng places "omens" among multivalent images.²⁴ Images paired with inscribed cartouches from the Wuliang shrine,²⁵ or from the cliff carving of the "Hymn of the Western Passage" (*Xi xia song* 西峽頌),²⁶ have been defined as a repertoire of omens (**Fig.8.5**). Omens are the result of a search for more tangible manifestations of Heaven. The idea of an omen (*ruixiang* 瑞像) was initiated by the anecdote of Confucius seeing a unicorn (481 BCE),²⁷ which was then re-articulated in Han times. Political omens were recorded under the rule of Han Wudi, and the concept was exploited by Wang Mang in his efforts to inherit the mandate of Heaven.²⁸ Commandery governors also resorted to omens to strengthen their local rule. The use of omens was then transferred to the private sphere, and the new genre thrived in funerary art.

²³ Thompson 1999:11.

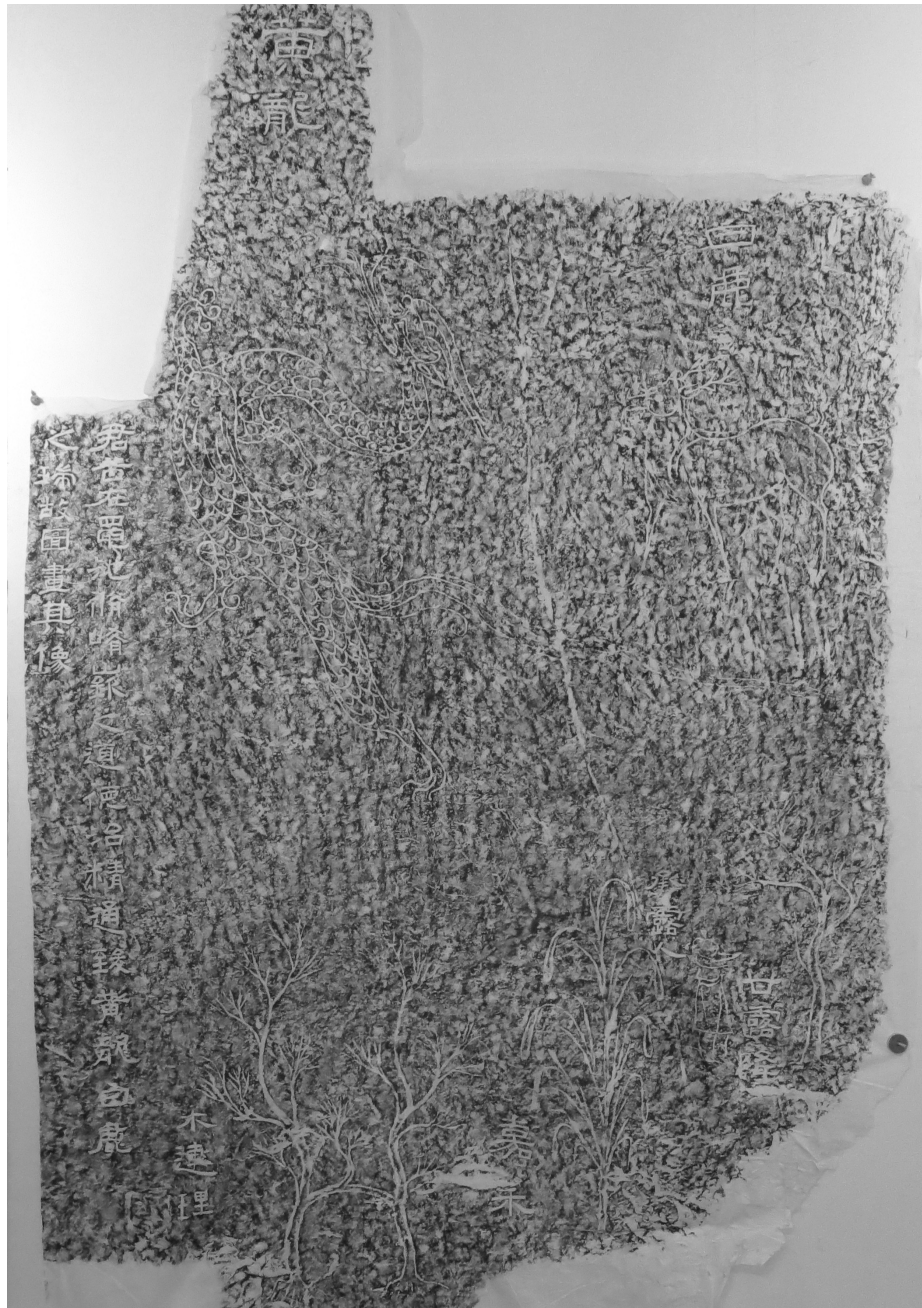
²⁴ see Tseng 2011:116-122 for an example of how the yellow dragon motif acquires different meanings according to its audience.

²⁵ Powers 1991:246-263 relates the Wuliang omens with rhetorical arguments used in political discourse. See also: Powers 1983, Wu Hung 1984, Kern 2000A.

²⁶ Five images are attached to this inscription in praise of the Grand Administrator of Wudu, Lixi, dated to 171 CE and located in present day Gansu province. See Chapter 2 in Lippiello 2001.

²⁷ Shi Ji, juan 47, page 1942-44. Cited in Tseng 2011:92.

²⁸ Tseng 2011:104.



8.5. Ink rubbing of the “Hymn of the Western Passage” (*Xi xia song* 西狭颂). 171 CE. Five images are attached to this inscription in praise of the Grand Administrator of Wudu, Lixi, located in present day Gansu province. The five auspicious omens are: a yellow dragon (*huang long* 黃龍), a white deer (*bai lu* 白鹿), a blade of maize (*jia he* 嘉禾), a pair of trees with intertwining branches (*mu lian li* 木連理), and sweet dew (*gan lu jiang* 甘露降). 200cm h x 100cm w.

A single multivalent image can be read across different identities, which in the 150s CE would have been a mixed audience of peasants, local officials and landowners. The image served diverse, sometimes contradictory aspirations. Such images would have been the Eastern Han equivalent of community patronage in the 3rd-4th centuries CE for a type of pictorial and sculptural production coined “ordinary images” by Abe.²⁹

²⁹ Abe 2002.

Nylan recycles Abe's formulation for the Sichuanese pictorial repertoire, pointing at their "ordinary mysteries",³⁰ where the sense of status conveyed by images from the Central Plains are replaced with human intimacy, humour and accessible myths. Just like ordinary images, multivalent images are purposively trying to reconcile state ideology and local cults. The viewers of such imagery are likely to be semi-literate to illiterate, so that if there was to be a rhetoric behind, it would not be of a literary nature. Instead of looking for the sources of such imagery only in texts, one should consider more flexible narratives around famous themes being constantly re-interpreted through oral transmission. Coexistent yet divergent traditions meet in regional and popular expressions. In a cross-cultural perspective, the artistic production of imperial provinces, frontiers or colonies have been defined as simultaneously conveying elements of metropolitan and local cultures. The combination has been described for Egyptian funerary art of the Roman period, for example, defined by Riggs as a "double style".³¹ Such style is "discordant to our eyes" because it had to reconcile necessary and desired cultural references.³² While the resulting production in each context can appear as highly specific, it undergoes comparable mechanisms of negotiation.

From the outsider position provided by frontier visual identities, one can go back to the wider question of defining a Han identity covered in Chapter 2: Is there a Han style, or a Han visual identity? Similar issues were raised in the eastern mediterranean classical context. Riggs notes that

"difficulty arises when 'style' is applied to an entire culture or nation, which is the pitfall if one speaks of an 'Egyptian style' and a 'Greek style'. (...) a better alternative is to think of Egyptian and post-Achaic Greek art in terms of their systems of representation. Each system was characterized by certain assumptions or rules about pictorial representation, rules which transcended the individual artist, work, or time period."³³

Following Riggs' thinking, we would rather speak of a Han system of representation, to which the makers of frontier art refer in varying degrees. Looking at Han frontiers in the Korean Peninsula, Pai attempted to measure acculturation among local burial

³⁰ Nylan 2003:389-391.

³¹ Riggs 2005:7.

³² Castiglione cited in Riggs 2005:5.

³³ Riggs 2005:9.

cultures.³⁴ She distinguished successive stages in the process culture contact, relating them to growing degrees of acculturation. Pai sees changes in both the form and function of burial as the “highest degree of acceptance”,³⁵ implying a shift in socio-religious ideals. In lower degrees of acculturation, foreign objects are merely substituted for native ones, imported, or imitated in shape, and involve no new technological skills. The interest of Pai’s enquiry lays in the distinction and degrees she identifies between mimetic reactions of reduced culture contact, and the adoption of the entire Han socio-religious mindset by the native group. This kind of analysis leads to far more nuanced results than the use of terms such as “influence” or “diffusion”, usually defined as the flow of cultural materials from one population to another. As rightly noted by Hein,

“although the term ‘diffusion’ is usually avoided today, it continues to be a preferred mode of explanation in contemporary Chinese scholarly practice. Scholars continually resort to ill-defined notions of population movement and long and short-distance ‘contacts’ to account for material culture similarities between different regions.”³⁶

To confront to the Han system of representation, “multivalent”, “ordinary” or “double style” images provide us with a collection of singularities, which agency is aimed at cultural negotiation through formal experimentation. When an active role is recognized in artefacts, “each and every occurrence” of it counts, because it might have a different meaning.³⁷ According to Riggs,

“How these properties are combined to form a coherent whole is important, not as a positivist exercise or as an end in itself, but as a step towards further interpretation... Form is one possible vehicle for expression and the transmission of meaning.”³⁸

Because of the nature of depictions south of the Yangzi, this study combines a technological approach with formal analysis, as is often the case in Rock Art Studies. The grouping of external (location, technique, etc.) and intrinsic elements (basic shapes, descriptive attributes),³⁹ define “mental templates” used by the makers. Such mental templates are the basic components of a tradition. A tradition is defined by “temporal continuities represented by consistent configurations in single technologies

³⁴ Pai 1992.

³⁵ Pai 1992 :314.

³⁶ Hein 2014:1.

³⁷ Hodder 1982. Cited in Barnes 2003:47.

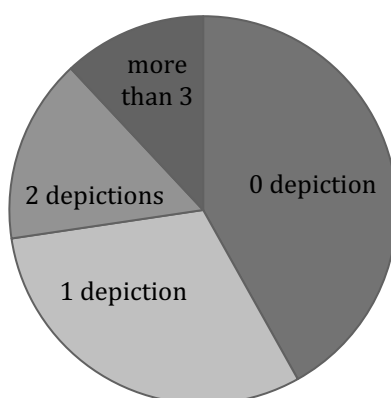
³⁸ Riggs 2005:7.

³⁹ Francis 2001.

or other systems of related forms”.⁴⁰ In the section below, depictions are classified by order of frequency and structural importance in the funerary space. A profile of multivalent Type 2 caves is outlined, as compared to Type 1 caves and Han tombs in general.

8.2. Depictions in Type 2 caves south of the Yangzi

As seen in the table below, more than half of the Qi River caves have at least one depiction, depictions being counted here as any single feature except for door recessions (**Fig.8.6**).⁴¹ About 30% of the caves have more than two depictions. In a few cemeteries, the outdoor cliff face or the indoor walls of caves are covered in line-carved depictions. Indoor wall dressing is counted as a single depiction when it actually covers the whole indoor space (the four walls and ceiling), in densely knitted geometric patterns often organised in frames, rather than just chisel marks, a product of manufacture.

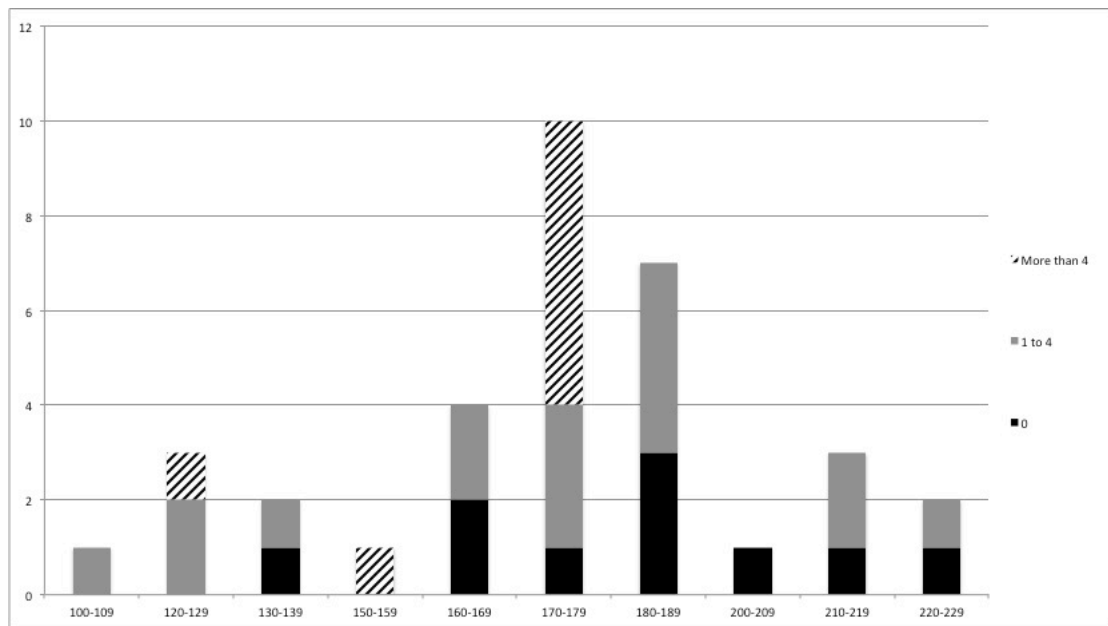


8.6. Number of depictions by cave in the Qi river area (n=133).

There are as many undecorated as decorated dated caves in all decades, except for earlier dated caves, which are almost all decorated till 140 CE. The depiction “peak” in the decade 170-179 CE is a distortion due to the Qigedong site, so that most decorated caves are concentrated between the years 180 to 189 CE (**Fig.8.7**).

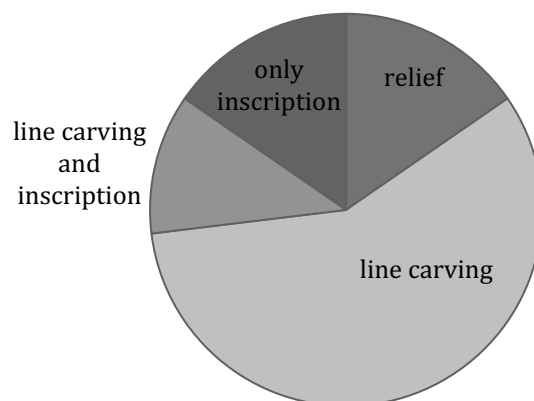
⁴⁰ Willey And Phillips 1962:37.

⁴¹ For 579 caves included in this study, 103 are decorated, with a total of 133 depictions south of the Yangzi and 51 depictions in the Sichuan basin. The 133 depictions south of the Yangzi are listed in Appendix to Chapter 8 : Depictions Table.



8.7. Proportion of depictions in dated Qi river caves (n=34).

Most Type 2 depictions are line-carved (**Fig.8.8**). About half of the inscribed caves have depictions, so that the relation between the presence of depictions and inscriptions does not seem to be a necessary one. A small proportion of depictions is executed in low relief, mostly human figures, while the only type of depiction found in high relief are rock-cut gourds integrated in the recessed doorways.



8.8. Proportion of carving techniques in the Qi River area (n=133).

Indoor depictions are less perceptible, due to the lack of natural light inside, and easily get confused with the deep chisel marks of the wall dressings. Patterned dressings on walls and ceiling, a category of depictions that stands between chisel marks and motifs, are usually not even considered as depictions worth reporting, despite their

sometimes hypnotic visual qualities. Elaborate depictions often intermingle with the wall dressing, like in Suobian (**Fig.8.9**).



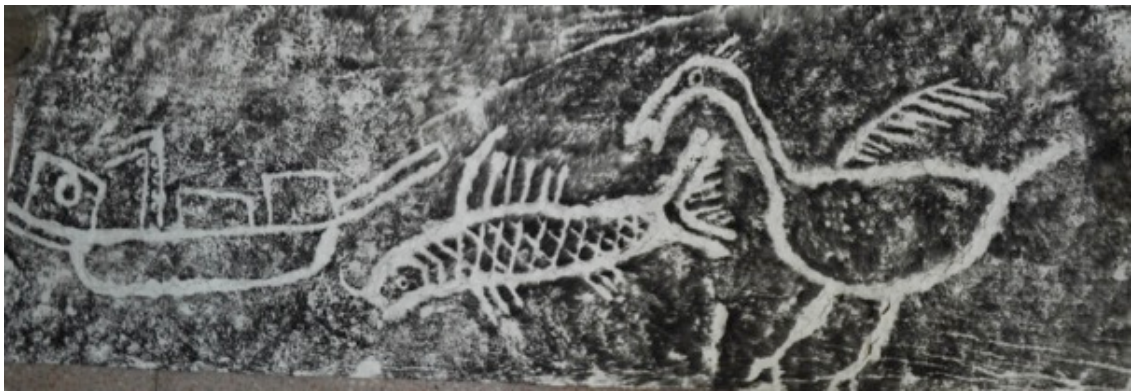
8.9. Indoor panel in Suobian. Banan district, Chongqing municipality. 50cm h x 90cm w.

A series of depictions found south of the Yangzi are discussed below, for which images are provided in the an appendix to Chapter 8 entitled “Depictions catalogue”, in the following order:

- (1) Frequent motifs: fish, bird, horse
- (2) Outliers: the term “outlier” designates carvings that are rare among the Qi River caves, while they are systematically present in the Sichuan basin or in Eastern Han funerary art in general.
- (3) Human figure (partial, full or in scenes)
- (4) Recessed cave opening and other doorframe additions (gutterline, roof tiles)
- (5) Architectural motifs (pair of *que* tower gate reduced to a single tower, *dougong* bracket set also integrated in wall dressings)
- (6) Geometric patterns (as wall dressing, in panels, or isolated)

8.2.1. Frequently occurring motifs

The most frequently encountered depictions are the fish, bird, and horse.⁴² All three are also commonly encountered in Type 1 caves. The fish is traditionally part of an altar or table setting and associated with the idea of abundance. When repeatedly represented, it conveys the ideal of continuity over generations.⁴³ The bird is presented as an auspicious figure, potentially referring to the phoenix (*fenghuang* 鳳凰), the three-legged crow (*sanzu niao* 三足鳥) or the crane (*xianhe* 仙鶴), respectively alluding to the south, the sun or immortality.⁴⁴ Both the fish and bird are found in associations with other figures on the outdoor cliff around the cave opening,⁴⁵ such as a boat in Sanchahe (Fig.8.10).



8.10. Rubbing of a bird + fish+ boat in Sanchahe. Xishui county, Guizhou province. 215-223 CE. Source: courtesy of Xishui county archaeological office. 80cm w.



8.11. Bird + frog + human figure in Shuanghetang. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. Carved next to an inscription dated 181 CE. 20cm h.

⁴² See the first three sections of Catalogue 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 for frequent motifs.

⁴³ Luo Erhu 2001:54. Erickson 2003:444 looks at series of fish, like in Catalogue 6.1.1.9, and fish joined at the head.

⁴⁴ Luo Erhu 2001:47. Erickson 2003:444.

⁴⁵ Catalogue 6.1.2.1 and 6.1.2.2.

The horse is found alone, led by a human figure, or with a chariot attached. It is alternatively considered as a status marker, as part of processional scenes, or as a “celestial horse” (*tian ma* 天馬) (Fig.8.12 and 13).⁴⁶ All three symbols - the fish, bird and horse - listed above share a common characteristic: they do not bear only one meaning. It seems that the multivalency of these images and their frequency mutually reinforce each other. The evocative power of these images both motivates their use in a variety of circumstances and derives from their pervasive presence.



8.12. Outdoor Horse in Baishulin. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. Carved next to an inscription dated 172-178 CE. 50cm h x 80cm w.



8.13. Wheels of a chariot in Suobian. Banan district, Chongqing municipality. 60 cm w.

⁴⁶ Luo Erhu 2001:49.

8.2.2. Outlier motifs and traveling techniques

Outlier motifs are technologically distinct, as in the case of rock-cut elements, or differ in content, as in the case of a bow tie-shaped symbol often referred to as *sheng* (勝), also found as a head ornament on depictions of the mythical Queen Mother of the West (*Xi wang mu* 西王母).⁴⁷ The symbol appears above the entrance of a cave in Shihutou, along the Zhenxi tributary, associated with two figures holding the sun and moon disks and a rock-cut bird.⁴⁸ The cave is 2m wide for 2m deep, with a triple recessed door (Fig.8.14).



8.14. Butterfly-shaped symbol (*sheng* 勝) (12cm w.), pair of figures holding sun and moon disks and rock-cut bird (20cm w.) on door lintel in Shihutou, Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. Found in the same group of caves as an inscription dated 122 CE.

High relief stone working is rare in the area, it is always integrated to the door layers and never found indoors. A motif often encountered in rock-cut ensembles of the

⁴⁷ For the diffusion of the *sheng* motif, see Knauer 2006 and Barnes 2014:16-17. During preliminary survey, I have collected a series of *sheng* as they appear in rock-cut tombs and on decorated stone coffins in the Sichuan basin. Although they exceed the scope of this Chapter, the examples show a very wide use of the symbol: on door lintels, above representations of an half-opened door, as an object held by serpent-tailed figures, etc.

⁴⁸ See one more occurrence of a *sheng* on a door lintel in Qikongzi heba in Catalogue 6.2.3.

Sichuan Plain, the pair of rock-cut gourds is only rarely reproduced south of the Yangzi.⁴⁹ The symbols are also used in wooden architecture perhaps because they were thought to ward off fire, although they also could stand as a metaphor for fertility and a numerous progeny.⁵⁰ One cave in Erdengyan has only one gourd placed in the middle of the recessed door lintel instead of the usual pair of gourds (**Fig.8.15**).



8.15. Single gourd in Erdengyan. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. Door width 125cm.

Another rare example of rock-cut ornament is the rooftile-shaped lintel in Qigongzui (**Fig.8.16**). The interlacing lines carved next to the cave resemble a preliminary draft for a similar kind of relief (**Fig.8.17**). As similar carved lintels are common in Guanyindong, 150km further north in hilly Sichuan, this is an example of traveling technique (**Fig.8.18**).



⁴⁹ See Catalogue 6.2.2.1, 6.2.2.2 and 6.2.2.3.

⁵⁰ Erickson 2003:425.



8.16. Rock-cut rooftiles on lintel above cave no.2 in Qigongzui. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. circa 179-181 CE.

8.17. Interlacing lines. Right of cave no.2 in Qigongzui. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. circa 179-181 CE.

8.18. Rock-cut rooftiles in Guanyindong. Neijiang City, Sichuan Province.

8.2.3. Depictions specific to the area

Some carvings found in Type 2 caves south of the Yangzi, are not found in the Sichuan basin or in Eastern Han funerary art in general. These are mostly human figures, found represented only partly (heads), as isolated figures (figure in a long coat, ape-like figure, figure with one raised arm), or in scenes (dancers, acrobats, etc).⁵¹ In Qigongzui and Shihutou, the same figure dressed in a long coat could be mistaken for a tower (the *que* pillar discussed in the section below).⁵² Human figures sometimes borrow the position of more familiar motifs such as gourds, which in Qikongzi are re-interpreted as caryatids (**Fig.8.19**).

Finally, a collection of one-off occurrences gives the idea of a fragmented periphery, where even adjacent tombs use totally different motifs.⁵³ These could be attributed to hyper-local traditions, or to a wider latitude for personal endeavours in the design of Type 2 funerary spaces.

⁵¹ A section is devoted to human figures in Catalogue 6.3.

⁵² In Catalogue figures 6.3.2.6 and 6.3.2.7.

⁵³ A section is devoted to outliers specific to the area in Catalogue 6.2.1.



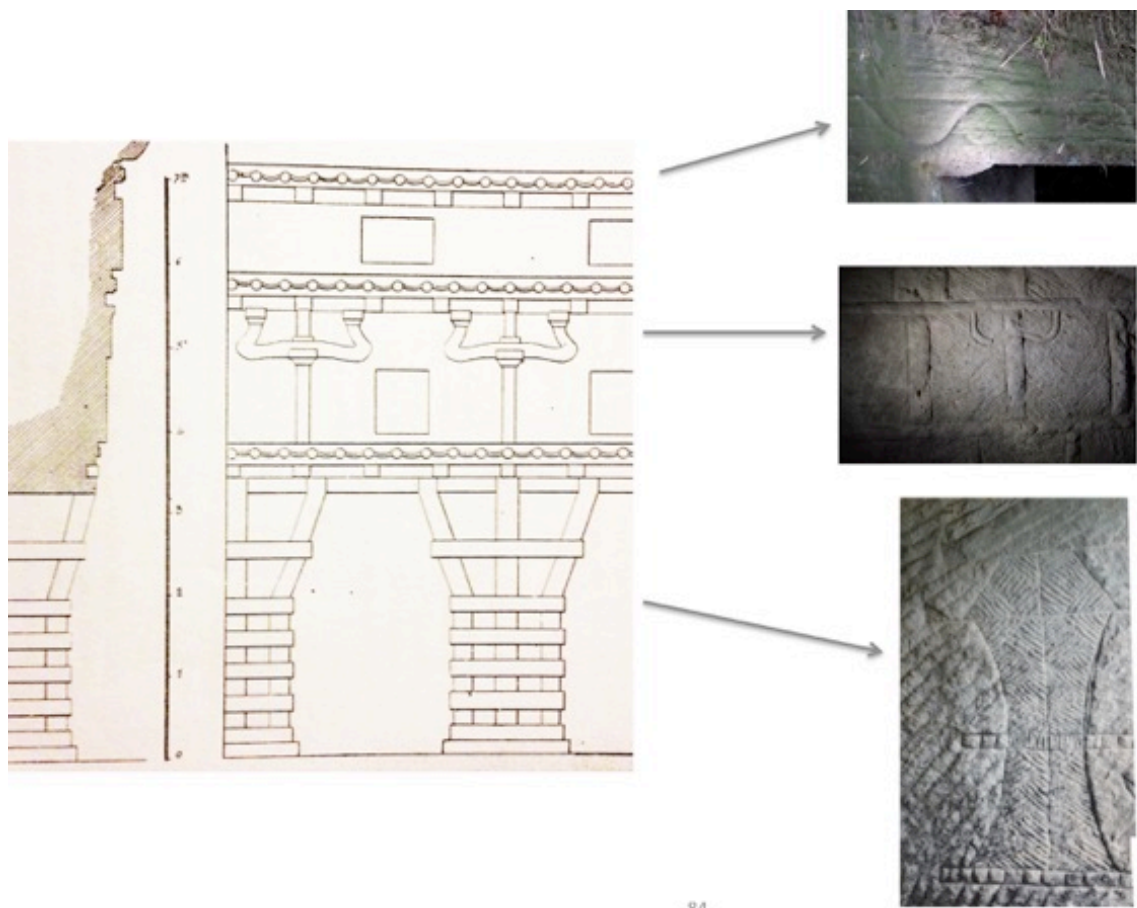
8.19. Rock-cut pair of human figures in Qikongzi. Lichuan county, Hubei province.

8.3. Architectures

The previous section laid a general description of depictions south of the Yangzi. Frequent and outlier motifs were identified, whose meaning can be multiple and adapt to new environments, and emerging new types pointed at that await interpretation. This section looks at another type of multivalent depictions that play a structural role in the funerary space, comparing their occurrence in Type 1 and Type 2 caves.

Architectural elements and their translation in Type 2 caves are here contrasted with potential models from Type 1 funerary spaces. In the monumental rock-cut façade of a Type 1 antechamber reproduced below,⁵⁴ architectural elements are ordered from top to bottom: roof-tiles, windows, bracket sets, roof-tiles, and pillars (**Fig.8.20**). This re-interpretation in stone of a wooden architecture shows an organized architectural vocabulary of elements, which in Type 2 caves is abbreviated. Roof-tiles are reduced to wavy lines, bracket sets become part of indoor wall dressings and pillars are represented as self-standing towers.

⁵⁴ A section is devoted to the Type 1 antechamber in Huangsan in Catalogue 6.7.



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8.20. Line drawing of a rock-cut façade in Leshan city, Sichuan province. Source : Segalen 1917 :196. To the right are abbreviated forms of architecture from Type 2 caves south of the Yangzi.

8.3.1. Recessed door : Symbolic meaning and equivalent in Type 1 caves

The previous chapter noted that recessed doors are an important technological and stylistic marker of the Type 2 cave tradition. This subsection looks at potential equivalents in terms of function and meaning of Type 2 recessed doors in the corpus of known Type 1 cave burials.

To begin it is worth stating that, for Type 1 tombs, there is not one functional equivalent to the recessed door, which seems to conflate several functions and layers of symbolic meaning. Complex Type 1 rock-cut caves, such as in Huangsan surveyed in Chapter 4, have a large-sized open antechamber. The antechamber is replaced by a trench cut in smooth sloping terrain in most average Type 1 cliff tombs, whose length varies between a couple of metres to 30-40m.⁵⁵ The trench is an essential addition to the chamber, for rituals to be held in the funerary space. In the case of shaft tombs, it

⁵⁵ Recently excavated example in Xinjin, personal communication Wang Yu.

allows to finish the chamber while still reserving an access to it.⁵⁶ From the trench, the future tomb occupant can see his tomb and all can be prepared before the interment. However, it is also the weak point of the tomb, that from which robbers find an easier access to the chamber, which explains its several closures and the discretion of its location over-ground. A first sealed entrance divides the sloping trench and the level tunnel leading to the tomb chamber. When a cave opening has more than one sealing device, the last closure comes right at the end of the tunnel. The tunnel's length can vary between several metres and a few dozen centimetres, which makes it look just like a thicker doorframe. Drainage channels are usually dug on the floor of tunnels and trenches to evacuate the water that would accumulate in the cave. A fair proportion of the depictions found in the cave are located in the better lit section of the tunnel walls. If paralleled with the entrances of Type 1 caves, the recessed doors in Type 2 caves cumulate the functions of an antechamber, those of a trench, and those of a tunnel, as well as that of the successive closures. By conflating functions such as display, commemoration and enclosure as well as acting as drainage devices, the recessed doors become a complex, ambiguous entity.

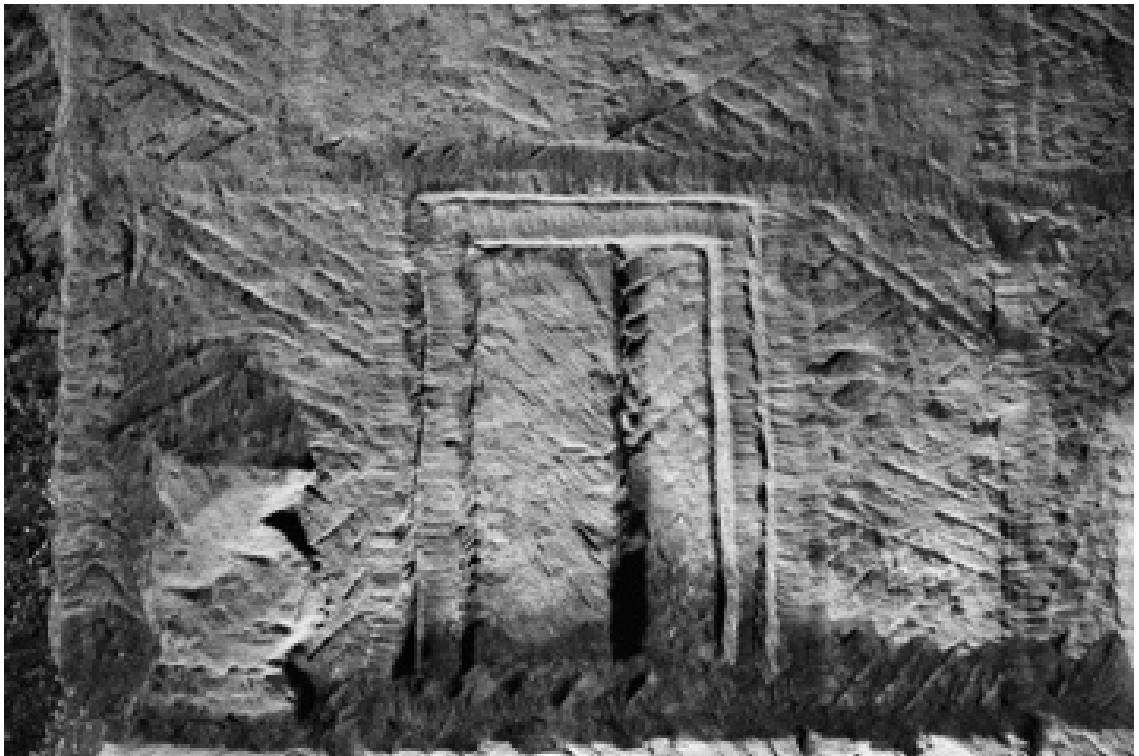
Let us now look at potential Type 1 counterparts for the symbolic aspect of Type 2 recessed doors. The main symbolic element found in Type 1 caves that evokes the idea of "a space beyond" is the half-opened door. The motif of the door left ajar, often represented with a maiden on its threshold, guiding the viewer in or peeking out of the space behind it, conveys an ambiguity peculiar to funerary art and liminal spaces in general. A few examples of the half-opened door as it is encountered in Type 1 funerary spaces are illustrated below: they come in a wide range of scales, techniques and modes of representations. Life-size examples of half-opened doors are usually placed on the back wall of the cave, such as in Bailinpo M1 and Taliangzi (**Fig.8.21**). Here, the doors are perfectly integrated in the pseudo-wooden framework that structures the indoor space, creating the impression of architectural interior. In Taliangzi, an existing fault in the rock has been exploited to create a more vivid illusion of depth. Smaller representations of half-opened doors found on relief architectural models constitute an interesting case of flat relief, executed with a simple sloped incision on the rock face to confer depth (**Fig.8.22**). When the pseudo-door is left ajar,

⁵⁶ Segalen 1917:206.

the figure of a maiden in flat relief stands on its threshold (**Fig.8.23**). When the door is completely open, its frame is recessed to recreate a sense of depth (**Fig.8.24**). When completely open and hollowed out, miniature doors serve as niches placed on the cave walls, more often integrated in architectural models of the granary type, possibly containing offerings, or simply suggesting the idea of storage (**Fig.8.25**).



8.21. Maiden at the half-opened door in Bailinpo M1. Santai county, Sichuan province. Door height 130cm.



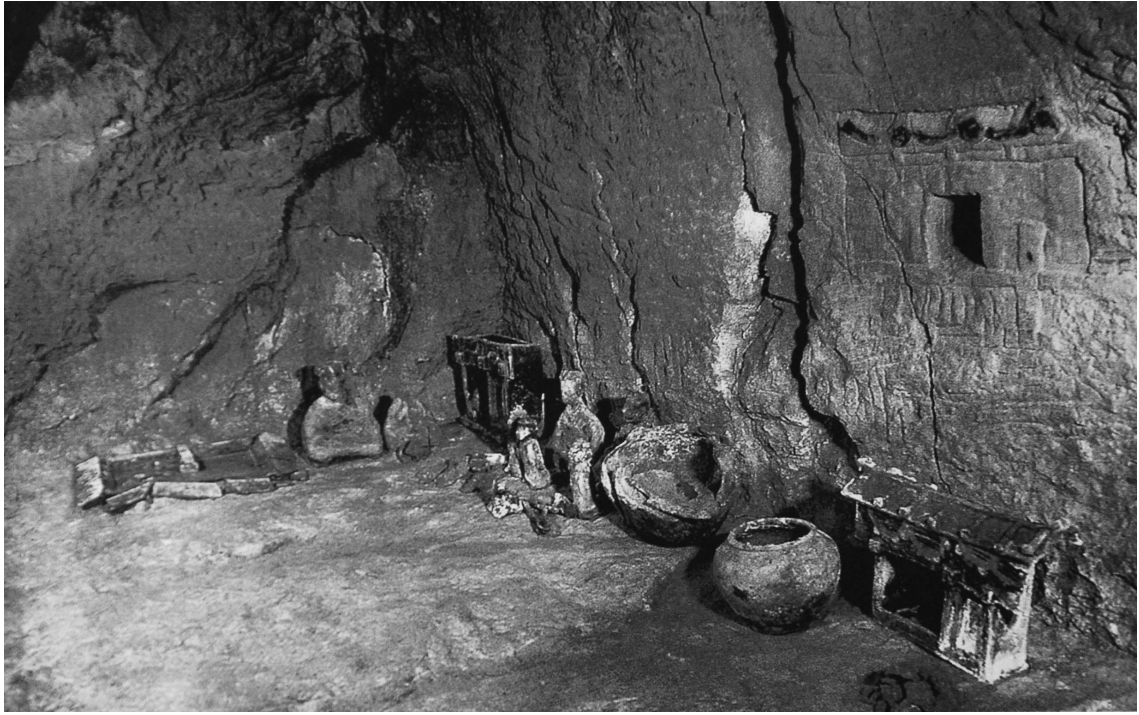
8.22. Half-opened door in Citangpo M9. Anyue county, Sichuan province. Door height 10cm.



8.23. Maiden at the half-opened door in Citangpo M9. Anyue county, Sichuan province. 8cm h.



8.24. Opened door in Citangpo M9. Anyue county, Sichuan province. 8cm h.



8.25. Set of ceramic grave goods placed next to a rock-cut architectural model. Bailinpo M2. Santai county, Sichuan province. Source: Fig.219 in Santai: 2007.

Both in the half-opened door motif found in Type 1 caves, and in the recessed treatment of Type 2 cave openings, ambiguity is enhanced by the fact that one cannot decide whether the doors are looking out, from the eyes of the deceased who watches over the living and their land, or looking in, from the eyes of the living who look after their ancestors. In short, “to see or to be seen” bestows an appealing ambiguity and reciprocity to funerary art, which serves a double user: the living and the dead. Within the living and dead, other distinctions can be made, between member of the family, non-kin member of the village or stranger, for example. Because of their inaccessibility due to height above ground, the doors act more as an entrance for the gaze or soul than for the terrestrial body. As developed in the next subsection, inscriptions evoke a “heavenly gate” (*tianmen* 天門) when referring to the towered gates, and the themes of ascension or the travel of the soul, much discussed in studies on Han funerary ideology, seem to fit the high-placed, seemingly inaccessible cave openings. To the idea of ascension however, one should add that of penetrating the cliff face or tunnelling the mountain, both developed in the last section of Chapter 8. Depictions found in Type 1 caves suggest that the builders of rock-cut burials exploited the parallel between digging a tomb in a cliff, and tunnelling the mountain. However, in Type 1 caves, the tunnelling metaphor is essentially contextualized within the

architectural space of the cave, as we have seen with the motif of the half-opened door, rather than at the scale of the whole cemetery. The recessions added to Type 2 caves go further by introducing an element conducive to guide the eye and the imagination towards a stepped progression into the mountain, or from the mountain outwards, at the scale of the whole cemetery.

8.3.2. Tower (*que* 阙)

Towers or pillars hold an important function in what Segalen calls the “funerary field” (*ying* 塋).⁵⁷ The field possesses an enclosure similar to the ramparts of a town, which entrance is marked by a pair of towers, a metaphor for the gate of a rampart. The term used to designate the towers, *que* 阙, also designates the buildings found on each side of a gate. When no enclosure exists, buttress-like smaller structures attached to the sides of the pillars stand as vestiges of an invisible rampart. The entrance gives way to the “spirit alley” (*shen dao* 神道), main axis of the funerary field. Segalen argues that the gates provide a “magnetic baptism” for the field, fixing its main axis perpendicular to the contour lines of hilly Sichuan, or visually framing the tumulus in the surrounding landscape. Indeed, orientation in the rugged terrain of Southwest China is relative to the immediate topography rather than to absolute cardinal directions. Not only is the pillar an essential monument to mark the entrance and orientation of the funerary field, but it is also an ostentatious mark of status, the most expensive architectural element of the whole complex. In an urban context, the *que* holds a political function, that of displaying imperial edicts. At the scale of the empire, the *que* retain a ritual function, as they marked cardinal directions on the sites of major imperial sacrifices.⁵⁸ The *que* thus cumulate several functions: to enclose, to display authority and status, and to construct a cosmology. The pillars in Qu county are sculptural versions which combine the above-listed architectural functions (**Fig. 8.26**).

⁵⁷ Chavannes 1893:24. cited in Segalen 1917:189.

⁵⁸ Chavannes 1910:179.



8.26. Uninscribed *que* pillar in Pujiawan. Qu county, Sichuan province. Estimated to date from the late Eastern Han period (2nd to 3rd century CE). 537cm h.

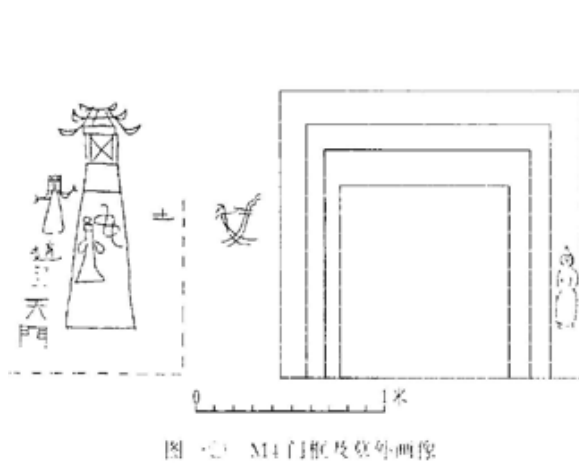
Compared to all other categories of depictions found in the Qi River area, towers are the ones that are most systematically present.⁵⁹ Also, they are always found in two types of locations: either outdoors next to the cave opening, or indoors on both sides of the entrance. Another distinctive aspect is that especially when found outdoors, the line-carved towers exceed the size of any other type of depiction. Although as introduced above, the towers are traditionally found as a pair forming a gate, south of the Yangzi they appear as a pair only in two occurrences. Most caves have only a single tower (**Fig.8.27**).



8.27. Outdoor line-carved *que* in Dongsanzhai. Shizhu autonomous prefecture, Chongqing municipality. 60cm h.

While losing the appearance of a gate, the single towers seem to retain part of its meaning. In Qigedong, the depiction of a single tower is referred to in an adjacent inscription as “heavenly gate” (*tianmen* 天門) (**Fig.8.28**). This denomination corresponds to the Guitoushan coffin label, placed next to the line-carved image of a pair of towers forming a gate (**Fig.8.29**). The term for “door” (*men* 門) is present in a number of inscriptions, but it is not always clear whether the term designates the cave’s entrance, or the carved depiction. It could even serve as a classifier preceded by a numerical term (一門). The confusion between actual architecture and its representation suggests a continuity between real and metaphoric space in a funerary context.

⁵⁹ A section is devoted to towers in Catalogue 6.4.1.



8.28. Line-carved tower with inscription on the cliff face left of Qigedong M4. Changning county, Sichuan province.

8.29. “Heavenly gate (*tian men* 天門)” depicted on a coffin excavated in Guithoushan. Jianyang county, Sichuan province. 50cm h x 40cm w.

The heavenly gate is interpreted as a step in the celestial journey of the deceased, an oft-cited early occurrence of it being the pair of pillars painted on the Mawangdui banners.⁶⁰ A couple of centuries later, on the Guithoushan coffin no.3, the gate appears among other motifs without a perceptible spatial articulation. What was articulated in a journey of the soul becomes a single motif with its own caption, an “omen” as defined in the first section of this chapter. From their tacit knowledge of myths and cosmology, Eastern Han craftsmen managed to give shape to visual representations of Heaven. Some motifs emerged with more or less consistency, such as the heavenly gate,⁶¹ which travelled and adapted to a variety of mediums (assembled stones on mound tombs, head side of quarried coffins, bricks, rock-cut vestibules sculptures, and of course, line-carved outdoor cliff faces....). In the process, structural elements had to be simplified and lost their articulation, finally acquiring a value of their own.

Having related the line-carved *que* to their function in the funerary field and symbolic meaning, let us look at their abbreviation from Type 1 rock-cut architecture to Type 2 line-carved depictions on cliff faces. Rock-cut pillars are located in the section of the Type 1 caves that remains accessible to the living. In the ornate halls of the high status Min River tombs of the early second century CE, pillars of the hall’s front facade are

⁶⁰ Tseng 2011:205.

⁶¹ Tseng 2011:7.

sculpted in the shape of towers visible from the riverbank, like in Huangsan (**Fig.8.30**). In Xiaoba, dated by inscriptions to the years 136 CE and 159 CE,⁶² towers are the main architectural ornament of the open rock-cut halls. In the middle section of the hall, the tomb opening is flanked by a pair of rock-cut towers (**See Fig.4.7**). The right section of the hall has been prepared with a tower and a small vestibule space, but the location was never used to cut a tomb in. The presence of rock-cut towers preceding the excavation of the burial chamber bring us to a last characteristic of tower depictions south of the Yangzi. Here too, the line-carved towers seem to precede the actual cave on the cliff face, as they are often overcut by the cave opening. It is possible that locations where a cave was to be carved were first marked by the depiction of a line-carved tower, like in Guanzhuangkou (**Fig.8.31**).



8.30. Facade of rock-cut antechamber in Huangsan. Yibin city, Sichuan province.

⁶² Gao Wen 1990:20.



8.31. Overcut line-carved tower below cave opening in Guanzhuangkou. Shizhu district, Chongqing municipality. 80cm h.

To summarise, towers are multivalent structures cumulating several functions and meanings. They seem to retain part of the function in the burial space they had in the Type 1 elite tombs of the Sichuan Plain, one of marking the tomb entrance or the location of a chamber, but in Type 2 tombs they are autonomized and simplified in terms of style and carving technique.

8.3.3. Bracket set (*dougong* 斗拱)

The third architectural element found south of the Yangzi that can be related to Type 1 funerary spaces is the bracket set (*dougong* 斗拱), initially part of the pseudo-wooden framework in decorated rock-cut burials.⁶³ The *dougong* already acquires a meaning of its own in Type 1 caves. In Bailinpo and Taliangzi, it is given an central position in the cave, without equivalent in wooden architecture (**Fig.8.32**). In the rock-cut chamber, it

⁶³ Erickson 2003:407.

acquires a cosmological function, with painted motifs of the sun and moon in-between the brackets (**Fig. 8.33 and 34**).



8.32. Front view of the central pillar in Bailinpo M4. Santai county, Sichuan province.



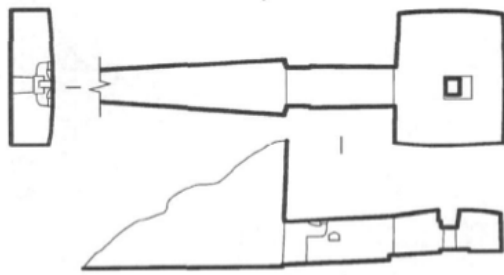
8.33. Front view of the central pillar in Taliangzi M1. Santai county, Sichuan province.



8.34. Detail of the central pillar in Taliangzi M1. Santai county, Sichuan province.

Central pillars require an initial division of the tunnel into two branches, which will join again to form the back wall, leaving a free-standing chunk of rock in the middle like in Bailinpo M4 (**Fig.8.35**). Interestingly, only the side of the pillar facing the entrance tunnel is finished: its back is only roughly shaped, left unfinished and unpainted (**Fig.8.36**). These elements were apparently meant to be viewed only from the entrance of the rock-cut burial.

Dougong in Type 1 commoners' burials, like in Chadian are reduced to their line-carved expression (**See Fig.4.18**). They retain a variety of shapes and appear both as part of a structure covering all cave walls and as autonomous motifs. *Dougong* are nearly absent south of the Yangzi, where my survey has only found a couple of occurrences (**Fig.8.37**). South of the Yangzi, geometric patterns refer to another type of vernacular architecture, as shown in the next subsection.



8.35. Groundplan and section of Bailinpo M4. Santai county, Sichuan province. Source: Fig.1-4. in Ma Xiaoliang 2012:83.

8.36. Back of the central pillar in Bailinpo M4. Santai county, Sichuan province.



8.37. Line-carved *dougong* in Tonggengzi. Qijiang district, Chongqing Municipality. Wall height 140cm.

8.3.4. Indoor wall dressing

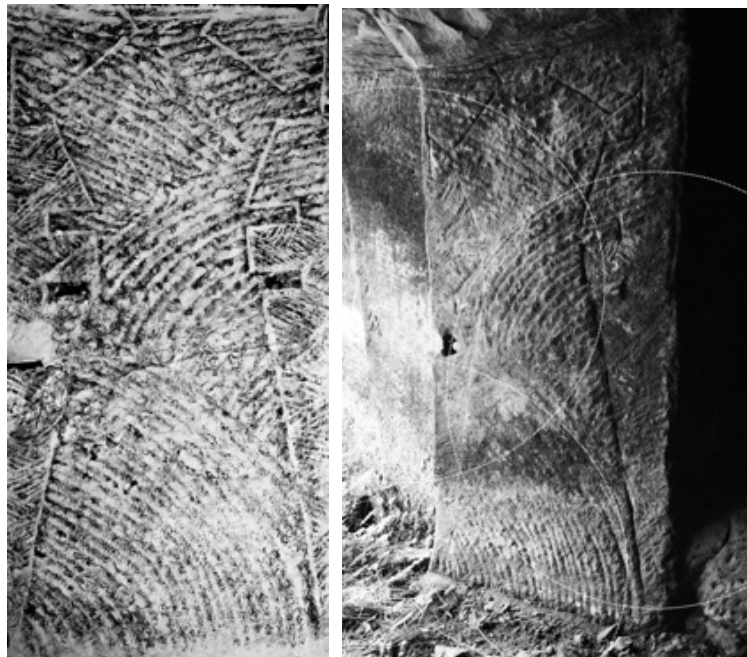
Cave walls and ceilings in Type 1 caves south of the Yangzi are divided into rectangular sections dressed by hatched fillings, resembling the wooden frames and adobe, reed or bamboo fillings of a hut. Dressing patterns on ceilings can be fan-like, with a centrally dividing roofline if triangular or vaulted (**Fig.8.38**). Pyramidal or domed ceilings have circular or square central ornaments. Some ceilings hold a square depression carved in their middle connected to the corners by oblique lines.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ A section is devoted to ceiling ornaments in Catalogue 6.4.4.



8.38. Wall dressing in Erdengyan. Qijiang district, Chongqing Municipality. Wall width 340cm.

The rich repertoire of dressing techniques, executed “as if drawing” on soft sandstone,⁶⁵ provided compositional guidelines for the carver who had to decorate the rock-cut chamber. The dressing played a structuring role in tracing the figures’ outlines **(Fig.8.39).**⁶⁶



8.39. Rubbing and proportions of a tower in Citangpo M8. 125cm h x 68cm w. Anyue county, Sichuan province.

⁶⁵ Rababeh 2005:93-8.

⁶⁶ Bessac 1986:47.

Architectural framing in Type 2 caves sometimes integrates schematized cosmological elements such as sun and moon (**Fig.8.40**), fishes (**Fig.8.41 and 42**), or panels of coins. Coins are another multivalent symbol which both conveys the idea of material security and the transmutation of objects.⁶⁷ Two panels of coins were found south of the Yangzi in Erdengyan and Guanzhuangkou,⁶⁸ and one occurrence of a storied structure with coin-like pendants, recalling the idea of a “money tree”, a motif specific to Eastern Han Sichuan.⁶⁹ Dressing patterns also form autonomous panels with geometric subdivisions placed next to the caves’ side niches or back walls.

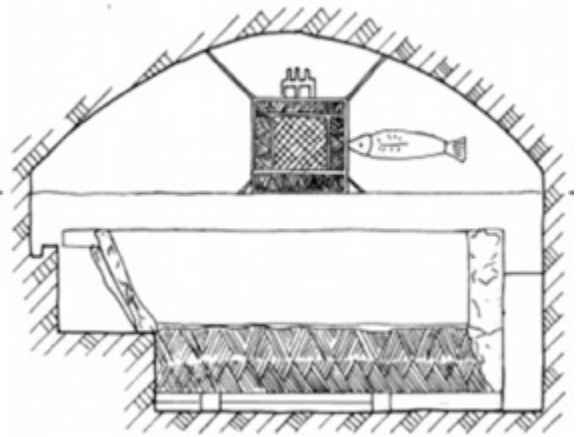


8.40. Wall dressing in Qikongzi heba. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. Circle diameter 12 cm.

⁶⁷ Nylan 2003:386. And Luo Erhu 2001:47-8.

⁶⁸ Catalogue 6.4.2.1. and 6.4.2.2.

⁶⁹ See the money tree in Miaoziding in Catalogue 6.1.2.5.



8.41. Line drawing of a back wall panel dressing in Yongjia. Tongliang district, Chongqing Municipality. 160cm h x 170cm w.

8.42. Dressing patterns on back wall and rock-cut coffin in Chaqishan M1. Bishan county, Chongqing municipality. Source: Fan Peng et al. 2012:30.

Indoor wall dressings accommodate elements which can be associated with tomb furnishing. As isolated panels they recall niches or windows, they can integrate altar furnishings such as fishes, or circular figures that can be interpreted as the sun and moon.⁷⁰ By contrast, outdoor panels are spread on the cliff face without an apparent order, like in Lianghecun.⁷¹ To investigate such panels, in the next section the distribution of Type motifs is contrasted to the spatial organization of Type 1 burial spaces.

8.4. Spatial distribution of motifs in Type 2 burials

A global view of decorated Type 2 sites is given in this section through the cemeteries of Qigongzui and Qigedong sites, both of comparable size and date, which depictions are compared in terms of distribution and relief.

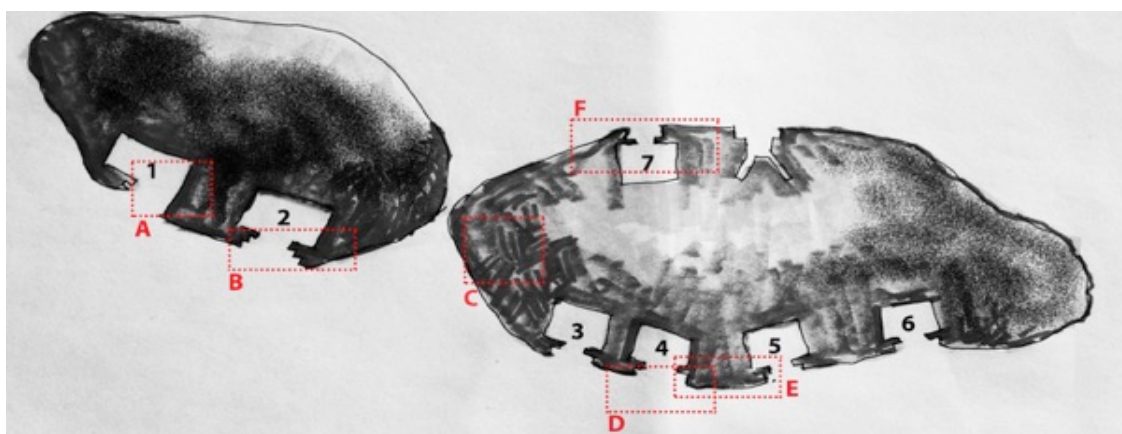
8.4.1. Indoor and outdoor depictions south of the Yangzi: The case of Qigongzui

Qigongzui is located on a minor affluent of the Qi River, at more than 600m of altitude. The site counts seven finished caves plus one unfinished, cut into two sandstone boulders, dated to the years 179-181 CE. Outdoor depictions are mostly found in groups, interspersed with the caves' openings. While it is often unclear whether the depictions can be directly associated with a specific cave, caves are the units to which depictions are attached in published inventories. The ground plan and table below

⁷⁰ Segalen proposes bronze mirrors as a potential counterpart for the sun and moon depiction among tomb furnishings: "suspended to the vault, they condense light, acting as celestial bodies...." Segalen 1917:210.

⁷¹ Catalogue 6.2.1.1.

group depictions in Qigongzui into 6 panels, not to prejudge the relationship between caves and carvings (**Fig.8.43 and 44**).



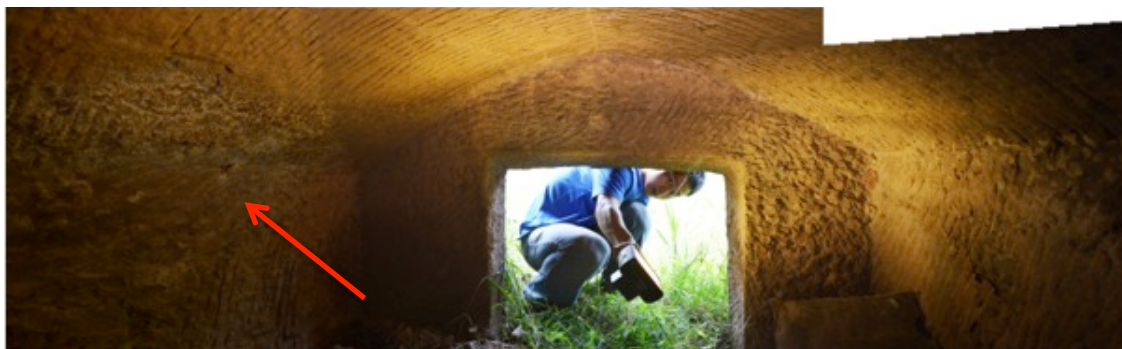
8.43. Groundplan of Qigongzui and limits of panels. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality.

Panel	Content	Location	Technique	cave
A	1 horse and carriage 1 frontal figure wearing a mantel 3 or 4 interlacing circles Dressing patterns	Indoor: Side wall	Line carving	1
B	Tiled roof Interlacing lines	Outdoor: Lintel, Right of door	High relief Line carving	2
C	Inscription dated 181 CE.	Outdoor: Smooth slope	Line carving	3?
D	Semicircular lintel with pai of disk 2 fish	Outdoor: Lintel Indoor: Side and back walls	Low relief Line carving	4
E	inscription dated 179 CE. 1 bird 1 fish	Outdoor: Between two caves	Line carving	4-5?
F	1 standing figure wearing a mantel 3 birds 1 head on top of a cross (bones?) 1 horse 1 "net" 2 polygons.	Outdoor: Around door	Line carvings	7

8.44. Content of panels in Qigongzui.

Although most depictions are located on the outdoor cliff surface, some of them are found indoors. In M4, indoor fishes are strategically placed where cleft off stone chunks have left a smooth surface (**Fig.8.45**). As walls and ceiling of the caves are covered in coarse hatchings, indoor depictions are usually overlooked by surveys. In Qigongzui for example, I found a whole indoor panel in M1 (Panel A) (**Fig.8.46**). A two-wheeled horse carriage, a standing human figure, and an interlacing figure, that were lost in the background chisel strokes. If visibility and an economy in carving effort mattered to the makers, the placing of line carvings on the exposed raw cliff gets at

least one rational explanation. From this perspective, one can look at outdoor panels such as Panel F in a radically different way (**Fig.8.47**). The figures are not just randomly spread on the cliff, but they were literally “pushed” out of the caves, and naturally clustered around the opening without the help of differentiated surfaces such as back walls, ceilings, junction lines and wall dressing to structure their spatial distribution. Once outdoor, the image gains in visibility.



8.45. Indoor space and location of fish in Qigongzui M4. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. 115cm w x 80cm h.



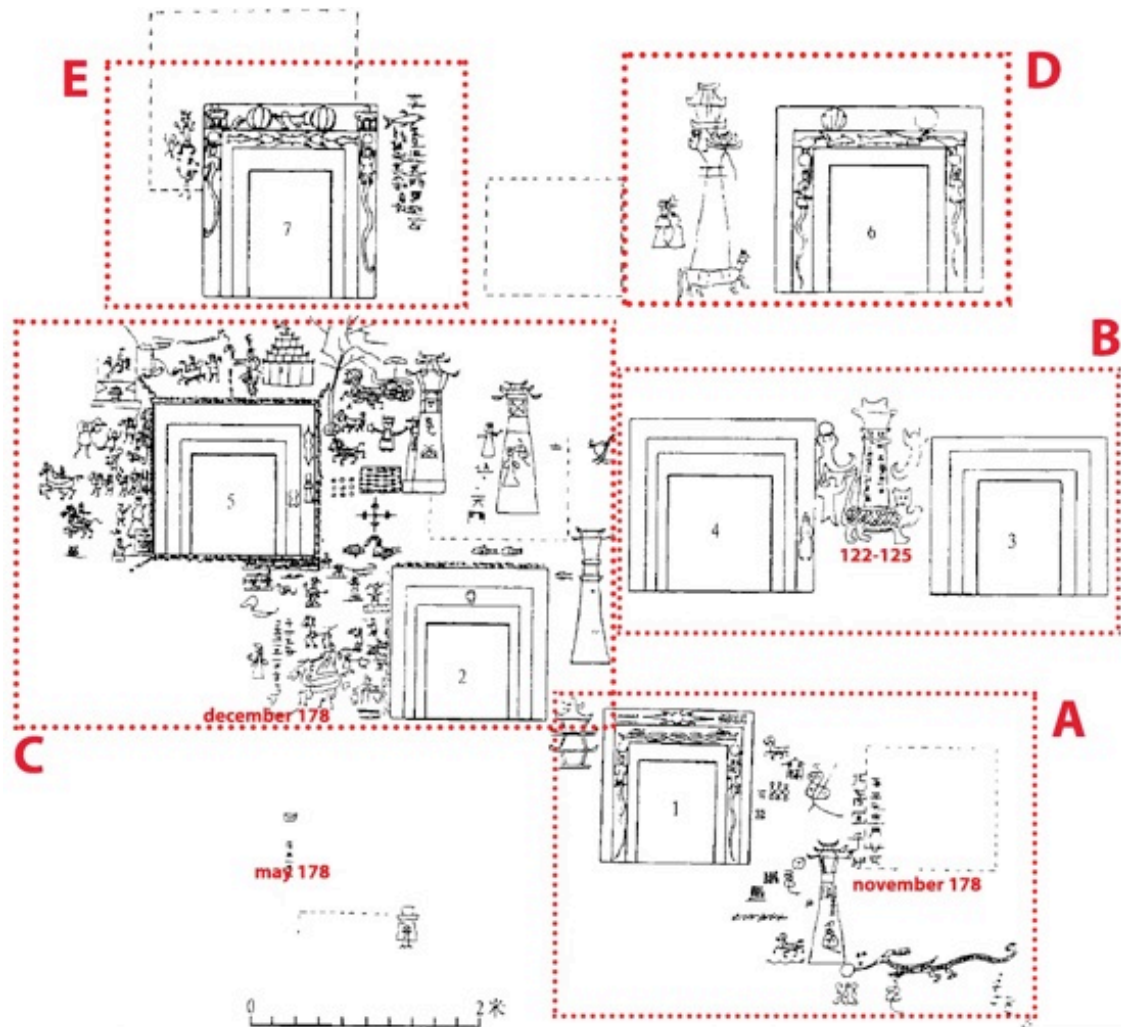
8.46. Indoor panel A in Qigongzui M1. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. 100cm w.



8.47. Outdoor panel F in Qigongzui M7. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. 240cm w x 263cm h.

8.4.2. Mixed Type 1 and Type 2 typologies: The case of Qigedong

The caves in Qigedong were all excavated on a same flat plane of the cliff face: here, delimitating panels becomes an interpretative issue (**Fig.8.48**).



8.48. Panels in Qigedong. Changning county, Sichuan province. 122-178 CE. Source: Luo Erhu 2005:280.

We have seen from inscriptions in Qigedong that carvings were made with time gaps between them ranging from one month to 56 years. While caves are roughly organized in rows, successive pictorial interventions carried little concern for previous carvings, as suggested by superimpositions (**Fig.8.49**).



8.49. Low relief birds superimposed to a line-carved figure in Panel C, Qigedong. Changning county, Sichuan province.

As previously noted, Qigedong is located in a mountainous enclave close to the Min River antechambers and to the Luzhou Plain decorated stone coffins. Burial typology is mixed in Qigedong with the presence of rock-cut coffins within four among the seven caves. At least one co-occurrence of rock-cut coffins and Type 2 depictions is found south of the Yangzi, in Miaoziding.⁷² The three caves in Miaoziding are cut into a single boulder on top of a hill overlooking the Pu River, a lower Qi River tributary. All three feature different versions of coffins: a rock-cut niche in the side wall of the cave, an open rock-cut container, and a rock-cut container with a moveable cover. Just like in Qigedong however, the depictions carved on the walls of Miaoziding correspond to Type 2 depictions of the Qi River area (**Fig.8.50**). A third site that mixes Type 2 depictions and Type 1 cave typology is Yutiantang, which is located in the ancient Fu pass between plain and highlands. Here, Type 2 line-carved *que* and geometric patterns on walls are found alongside Type 1 decorated stone coffins (**See Fig.4.10**). Because they contain rock-cut coffins, as well as both indoor and outdoor depictions, sites such

⁷² Three other caves have been reported as containing rock-cut coffins in the Qi river area : Longzui M1, Rongyan and Sanjiao M1.

as Qigedong, Miaoziding and Yutiantang allow us to formulate a relation between coffins, caves and cliffs as supports for depictions.⁷³



8.50. Rock-cut coffin and line-carved wall carvings in Miaoziding. Qijiang district, Chongqing municipality. Cave width 160 cm.

Three types of carvings are applied to rock-cut burials in general: flat relief on quarried coffins (or moveable stone slabs), indoor carvings in caves, and outdoor line carvings placed around the caves. Caves with indoor sculptural ornamentation and decorated quarried stone coffins are found throughout the Sichuan basin, while outdoor line carvings associated with small single cavities are specific to the area south of the Yangzi. In quarried stone coffins, the distribution of motifs shows some consistency. A cross is carved on the cover of the coffin, and horizontal narrative scenes on its long sides, while a pair of towers or a pair of tailed creatures is usually found on the front (head) and back (feet) square sides (**Fig.8.52 and 53**). When stored in caves, the square side of coffins face the cave opening and the back wall, as seen above in Yutiantang.



8.51. Cross on a coffin cover. Luzhou city, Sichuan province. Courtesy of the Luzhou Museum. 250cm w.

8.52. Pair of creatures on the short side of an unfinished stone coffin in Zhuwapu. Pixian county, Sichuan province. 90cm h x 82cm w. Source: Gao Wen 2011:134.

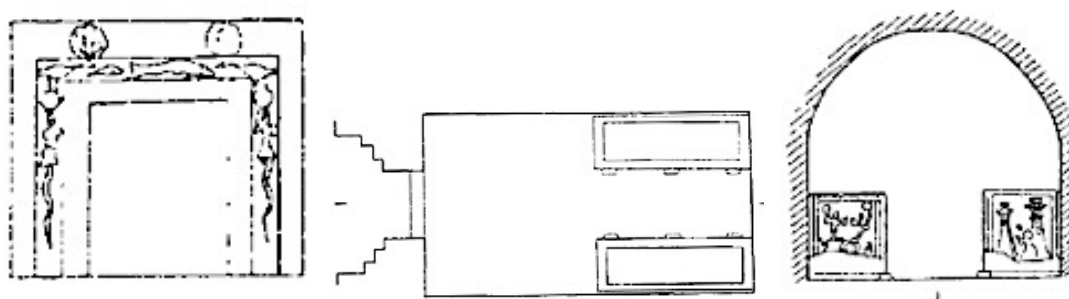
⁷³ A section is devoted to indoor panels in Catalogue 6.5.

As outlined in the table below, different media lead to specific technical procedures and spatial arrangements of the carved depictions (**Fig.8.51**).

	Coffins (only Type 1)	Indoor compositions (Type 1 and Type 2)	Outdoor compositions (only Type 2)
Location of depictions	Head Feet Cover Left and right side	Door frame Right and Left side of tunnel Right and left wall of chamber Back wall Ceiling Exposed side of rock-cut coffin	Above door Left and right side of door Not related to any particular cave
Technique	Quarried Cover and body (from one block?) Decorated Lifted in caves or buried in brick chambers.	Progressive relief Built-in Rock-cut elements	Line carving Low relief Recessed door frames
Content	Square face: Pair of tower Pair of tailed creatures (fuxi nuwa) Phoenix Side scenes : Carriage Scenes with human Figures Tiger and Dragon Cover: Cross	Rock-cut stove (only Type 1) Ram sculpture (only Type 1) Rock cut niches (mostly Type 1) Fish (mostly Type 2) Bird Animal mask Horse Towers Human figures and scenes	Towers (mostly single) Fish Bird Horse Human figures Outliers (tiger, dragon, toad, boat) Building

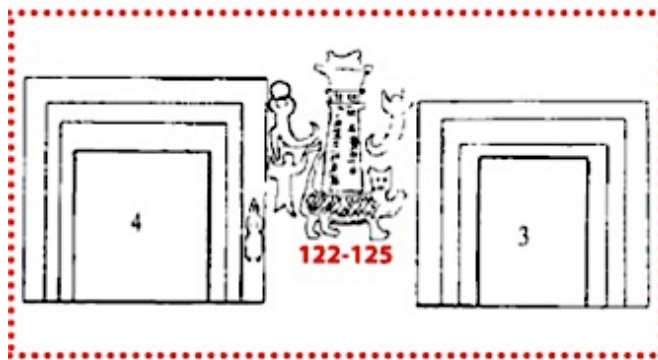
8.53. Three types of carvings found in rock-cut burials.

We will see below how in Qigedong motifs on decorated coffins can be bridged to depictions placed on recessed door-frames and on the outdoor cliff face. In mixed cave typologies such as Qigedong cave no.6, rock-cut coffins only have one square and one long side each, the other two sides being integrated to the cave walls (**Fig.8.54**).



8.54. Facade, ground plan and section of cave no.6 in Qigedong. Changning county, Sichuan province.
Source: Qigedong 1985:45.

The square faces facing out conserve the depiction of a pair of tower or a pair of creatures. The pair of creatures is repeated on the doorframe, flanking the cave opening. In this case, indoor and outdoor depictions respond to the same order. The caves that have no rock-cut coffin conserve this order of motifs on the doorframe, like in cave no.1. However, when it comes to depictions carved directly on the cliff face, the towers and serpent-tailed creatures are not systematically found in pairs, and they gain a certain degree of autonomy from the caves. In compensation, these depictions keep their prominence and are represented larger and in higher relief than any other figure (Fig.8.55 and 56).



8.55. Panel B. Qigedong. Changning county, Sichuan province. 122-125 CE. Source: Luo Erhu 2005:284.

8.56. Tower flanked by serpent-tailed creatures between caves no.3 and 4. Qigedong. Changning county, Sichuan province. 120cm h.

Scenes with interacting human figures similarly show relations between the distribution of depictions on the long side of coffins and on outdoor rock faces. In Qigedong, the longer side of rock-cut coffins displays dancing figures wearing long robes, battle scenes, acrobatic scenes or riders (Fig.8.57 and 58).



8.57. Ink rubbing of a battle scene on long side of rock-cut coffin in cave no.4 in Qigedong. Changning county, Sichuan province. 200cm w. Source: Qigedong 1985:49.

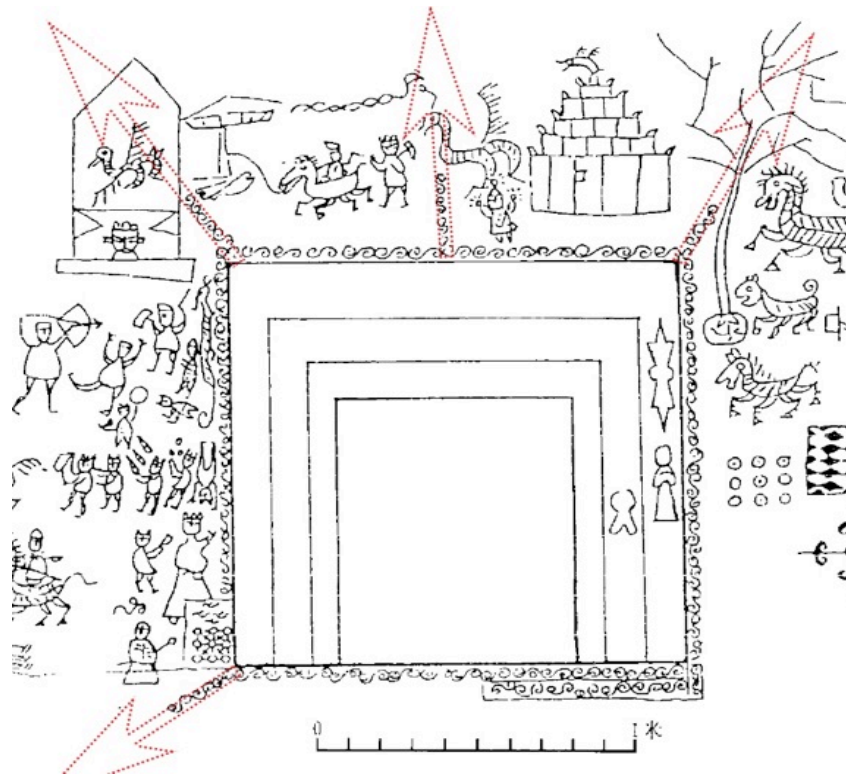


8.58. Ink rubbing of an acrobats scene on long side of rock-cut coffin in cave no.7 in Qigedong. Changning county, Sichuan province. 200cm w. Source: Qigedong 1985:49.

Crowded scenes are also depicted on the outdoor cliff face, but in faint line carving rather than in low relief. Panel C, organized around cave no.5, has fighting characters holding different weapons and acrobats (**Fig.8.59**). The interlacing ornament framing the door of cave no.5 suggests that such scenes were originally designed to fit framed surfaces on coffins. A row of S-shaped lines edge the recessed door on its four sides, four more fragments of the same pattern extending from the top right, middle, left, as well as bottom left, cutting through the clustered human figures, literally as if the pictorial content of a coffin had been flattened and projected outside. On the cliff face, the order of motifs that used to be expressed in the indoor space of the chamber, is now rendered in terms of size and levels of relief. Recessed doors, relief depictions and faint line carvings can be placed in order of progressive visibility, each being active at a specific distance and belonging to distinct perceptual zones (**Fig.8.60**). Rather than attributing such discrepancies to technical incompetence,⁷⁴ one can see a visual hierarchy at work on the cliff face.



⁷⁴ Luo Erhu 2001:66 sees different hands for reliefs and line carvings.



8.59. Details and line drawing of Panel C, cave no.5 in Qigedong. Changning county, Sichuan province.
Source: Luo Erhu 2005:287.



Recessed Doors

Tower
Pair of creatures
Tiger

Inscriptions
Symbols

scenes

8.60. Progressive visibility in Qigedong.

In sites such as Qigedong, intermediate forms such as built-in rock-cut coffins are significant to understand the transmission and adaptation of motifs to different supports, especially when the motifs in question were meant to express a spatial order in the cultural environment that originally produced them. Once the original distribution of these motives is abandoned, the function and meaning of motifs start a process of negotiation with local values or with competing cosmologies.

8.5. Cemeteries as artificial landscapes

8.5.1. Architectural functions evoked in tombs

It is generally accepted that the Eastern Han tomb was inspired by the domestic sphere, acted as a decoy for it, and provided an indirect illustration of everyday life back in the time. The idea of the tomb acting as a metaphorical double of the house also nourished more elaborated interpretations, which transfer architectural notions such as domestic functions and degrees of privacy to the funerary space. Wooden architectures mimicked in stone, clay models of buildings found in tombs, and representations of architectural settings, however, do not necessarily evoke a domestic environment. At least three types of non-domestic buildings are represented in cliff tombs:⁷⁵ towered gates, granaries and shrines (**Fig.8.61**).



8.61. Line-carved shrine flanked by two *que* towers in Changgou. Jiangjin district, Chongqing municipality.

⁷⁵ One good example of it are the three models found in a late Eastern Han cliff tomb in Huangjinwan (add reference for M22, Huangjinwan, excavated in 2016).

Among these, the representation of a towered gate, sometimes flanked by the caption “Heavenly Gate” (*tian men* 天門) and the model of a granary, associated with the denomination “Great Storehouse” (*da cang* 大倉) are the most commonly encountered architectural images in cliff tombs or coffins.⁷⁶ These architectures do not solely evoke the domestic sphere, but rather the essential functions of the tomb as a space to store and preserve, and as a gateway to another world. The shrine attached to the tomb, which remains accessible to the living, is a less easily identifiable element. The very few examples of shrines available from the Central Plains combine the functions of displaying effigies or tablets of the dead ancestors and that of over ground signals for the hidden chamber beneath. The decoration of the Wuliang shrine, for example, suggests outdoor banquets through highly geometricized spatial representations of mats and guests framed by screens. These mobile enclosures evoke ephemeral infrastructures of which only a schematic representation carved on stone, at a reduced scale, is accessible to us. By contrast, the rock-cut outdoor antechambers in Sichuanese cliff tombs offer life-size standing structures in the landscape, large enough to accommodate commemoration rituals and such like. Be it in terms of actual spaces or carved decoration, the funerary art of Sichuan has long been considered as more accessible and lively compared to the tight logic followed by engravings in the central plains, perhaps denoting regional differences in attitudes towards death. More easily integrated into the world of the living, Sichuanese antechambers and funerary spaces in general raise the questions of whether the funerary sphere had a feedback effect on conceptions about dwelling and architecture. The input of the funerary industry should be considered when architectural details such as the *dougong* bracket for example set loose their functionality and acquire autonomous meaning.

Although it is commonly accepted that Eastern Han dwellings were the blueprint for funerary spaces, influences are never only one-sided. Obstacles to the recognition of what funerary art may have contributed to architectural design, the understanding of landscape and the pictorial art in general, are mainly psychological. Nothing is supposed to come back from the tomb, even worse towards the house. Today, villagers settled in areas spotted with ancient tombs refuse to use Han pictorial stones

⁷⁶ Xie Ling 2000:23.

into building materials for homes, only using them for pig enclosures or dams. The association between tombs and dwellings seem to be acceptable only when it comes to alien cultures. As reviewed in Chapter 2, early literature mentioning the cliff tombs reports that villagers called the neighbouring cliff cemeteries “barbarian dwellings” (*manzi dong* 蠻子洞). Their resemblance to dwellings was strong enough to fuel interpretations that have lasted to this day. The so called “dwellings” are automatically associated with the “non-Han”, the barbarian, or in some cases, the aboriginal. Indeed, the “other” culture is often associated with otherworldly abodes, rather than the realm of the living. What prevents the viewers of tombs from recognising the inspiration they could draw from it, or what their built environment owes to tomb designs, are thus a combination of psychological and cultural inhibitions.

Architecture is often reputed to be the slowest domain of material culture to follow the pace of change and acculturation. Dwellings are solutions that harmonise subsistence needs, raw material availability and environmental conditions: all those aspects evolve over considerable spans of time. Funerary architecture instead, and even more so the plastic rock-cut sandstone discussed here, is without doubt more erratic. Beyond the new light they throw on the idea of dwelling, the Eastern Han rock-cut spaces have much to contribute to our understanding of the production and perception of the environment. A series of models of artificial mountains presented in the next subsection, riddled with caves and tunnels, act as an alternative to the ubiquitous architectural ornamentation. The models address the funerary complex as a whole, encompassing its location with respects to surrounding topography.

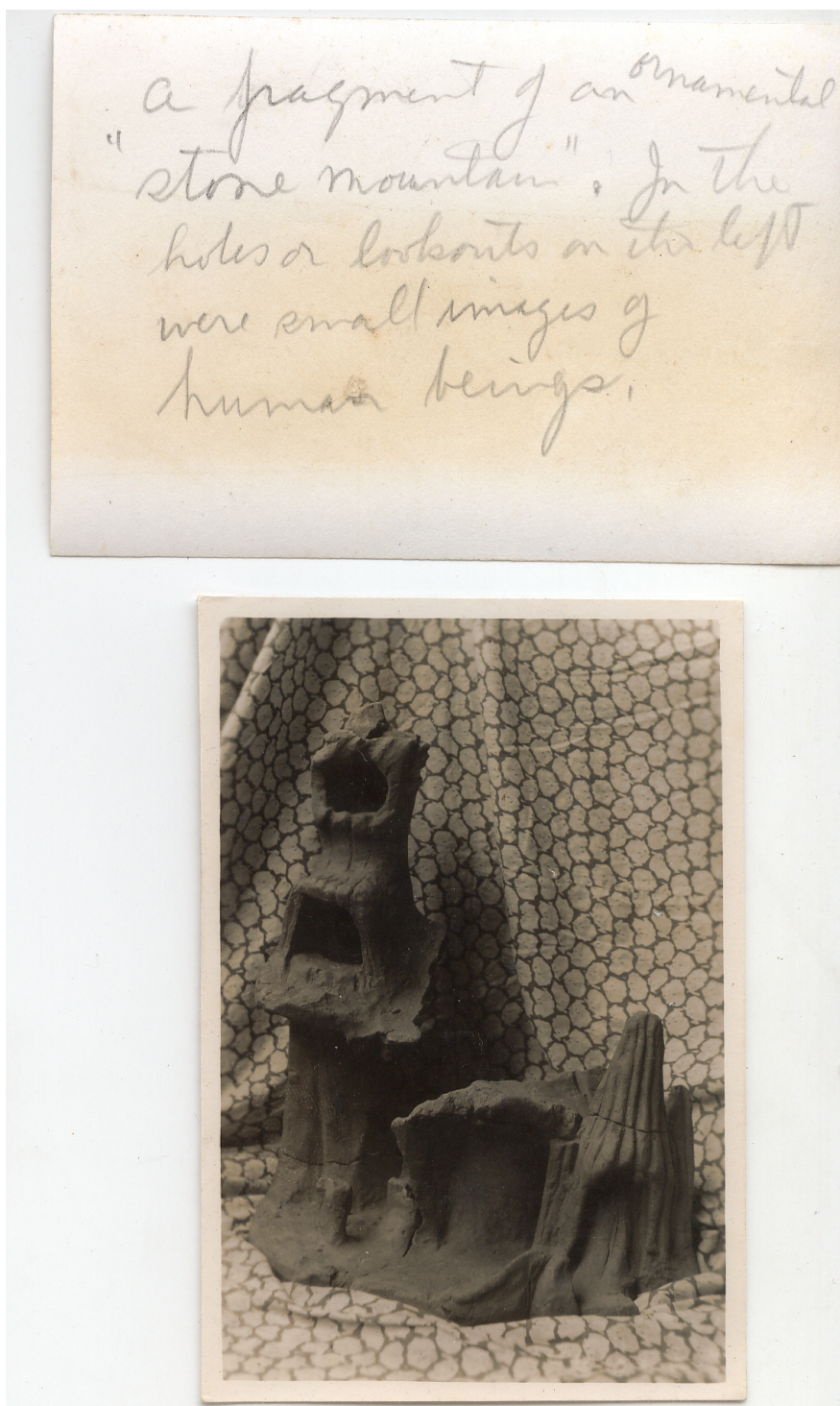
8.5.2. Clay models of an otherworldly mountain

While looking for any possible depictions of artefact models that might holistically render the environment where rock-cut cemeteries are inscribed, I came across several clay miniature mountains excavated in Eastern Han tombs. The first time I encountered a similar artefact was in Wu Hung’s publication on references to Daoism in the cliff tombs of Sichuan.⁷⁷ I then came across a photograph by Graham in the archive of the Sichuan University Museum, documenting his excavation of a Eastern

⁷⁷ Wu Hung 2000.

Han tomb in Suifu 徐府, present-day Yibin (**Fig.8.62 and 63**). In 1936, David Crockett Graham collected fragments of a “stone mountain”, which

“resemble the tops of large vases or bottles, but the sides resemble ornamental stone mountains with terraces (...). On the terraces were small clay images of human beings. One suggestion is that they may have contained large candles, and another is that they may have contained flowers”.⁷⁸



8.62. Photograph by Graham of model no.1 with his note on the verso. Source: courtesy of Sichuan University Museum.

⁷⁸ Graham 1936:98.



8.63. Photograph by Graham of model 2. Source: Graham 1937 in Sichuan University Museum 2014:2271. 67cm h.

In May 2016, the Chengdu Municipal Museum exhibited three similar models of a mountain in baked clay. All four models have a round hole 5 to 10cm in diameter on the top, resembling the one found on ceramic holders for cast bronze assemblages known as “money trees” (**Fig.8.64**). The models thus have the function of a pedestal rather than that of vase, or a candle-holder as conjectured by Graham.



8.64. Upper part of a clay model excavated in Lijialiangzi M1. Jintang county, Chengdu municipality. Now in Chengdu Municipal Museum.

All four models are structured in three columns, the higher one being the main peak, flanked by two secondary peaks (**Fig.8.65**), which in the two Lijiangliangzi examples each bear a Fuxi and Nuwa holding the sun and moon disks. A pillar-like peak is added in the foreground, slightly to the right of the main peak (**Fig.8.66**).



8.65. Tripartite back of part of a clay model excavated in Lijiangliangzi M1. Jintang county, Chengdu municipality. Now in Chengdu Municipal Museum. 65 cm h.

8.66. Profile of a clay model excavated in Yibin municipality, Sichuan province. Source: courtesy of Sichuan University Museum. 67 cm h.

The most complete of these artefacts, excavated in Baihua (**Fig.8.67**), shows a progression on three floors of the same figure, presumably the deceased. The character can be followed in fits and starts, but the path is often discontinuous, between the entrance or exit of a tunnel and unfinished bridges over gaping abysses. Departing from the ground floor, he is guided through a first mountain-shaped gate by a figure resembling scenes of a maiden at the doorway recurrent in funerary carvings. On the second floor, amidst the clouds, he is surrounded by several square entrances to caves, also crowned by flaming clouds. He then appears standing on a little platform on top of a pillar-like peak, facing the viewer (**Fig.8.68**). On the very top of the

mountain is a seated figure of the Queen Mother of the West, wearing her tricorn, mountain-shaped hat (**Fig.8.69**).



8.67. Clay model excavated in Baihua. Yibin municipality, Sichuan province. Now in Chengdu City Museum. 70 cm h.



8.68. Detail of the stand-alone peak and platform, last step on the itinerary of the soul. Clay model excavated in Baihua. Yibin municipality, Sichuan province. Now in Chengdu Municipal Museum.



8.69. Detail of the mountain top, with a seated figure wearing a tripartite hat, resembling the Queen Mother of the West. Baihua. Yibin municipality, Sichuan province. Now in Chengdu Municipal Museum.

In the Lijialiangzi M3 version, the deceased, having reached his last destination, is flanked on the platform by two maidens with ear-like buns, perhaps holding an artefact in their right hand on their chest (**Fig.8.70**).



8.70. Detail from a clay model excavated in Lijialiangzi M3. Jintang county, Chengdu municipality. Now in Chengdu Municipal Museum.

The clay models found in southern Sichuan give us a blueprint for progression of the soul towards the abode of the Queen Mother of the West, with slight variations between each version of the journey. This kind of discourse is not told by the individual tomb. However, what the caves do not achieve as discrete units, they can do together by “tunnelling” from one to another, as a network or as a whole. The tri-dimensional representation of a crowded mountainous landscape peppered with wide open caves seems to consciously avoid continuity and lead the viewer to lose sight of the path. Points of reference, however, are given, such as the sun and moon holders placed on the right and left peaks (**Fig.8.71 and 72**). When compared to the idea of funerary space, mentioned above, as a combination of the linear itinerary of a soul and a centred cosmic model, the perception of the environment is here enriched and complexified.



8.71. Clay model excavated in Lijialiangzi M2. Jintang county, Chengdu municipality. Now in Chengdu Municipal Museum. 70 cm h.

8.72. Detail of the Sun or Moon holder (Fuxi or Nuwa) wearing a tripartite hat, on top of the left peak. Lijialiangzi M2. Jintang county, Chengdu municipality. Now in Chengdu Municipal Museum.

The space and time expressed in these models are versatile, integrating fixed cosmological references and the journey of the deceased and to an assemblage of clouds and mountains pierced by open cave entrances. These models integrate a plastic version of the Eastern Han cosmos in local landscapes. When looking at the tomb of General Huo Qu Bing, Segalen notices how closely it resembles an artificial peak, and how in many ways, it parallels efforts to reconstruct landscapes which are exotic and otherworldly at the same time.⁷⁹

8.5.3. Eastern Han funerary symbolism and tombs south of the Yangzi.

Eastern Han tombs are thought to combine a linear space-time, corresponding to the itinerary of the soul, with a circular space-time, based on the regularities of nature and the cosmos. This combination of a worldly, limited lifetime with the cosmological order of nature would be reflected in tomb structure by the use of an trench, a tunnel or the

⁷⁹ Segalen 1917:41. For a recent rereading of exoticist and trophy-like aspects of general Huo Qu bing's tumulus, see also Eugene Wang 2011.

tomb's central axis, to suggest movement or the itinerary of the soul, and the use of a dome shape to establish a static, ordered model of the cosmos.⁸⁰ In the loosely designed space of cliff tombs, a recessed or half-opened-door leading to the other world occupies the liminal spaces of the threshold or the back wall of the burial chamber.

Apart from the tomb structure itself, the distribution of specific motifs can also respond to a spatial programme. We have seen that engraved stone coffins systematically combine motifs evoking the cardinal directions (red bird, dragon, tiger or dark warrior) and the stages in the progression of the soul (pair of *que* forming a gate, chariot scene, half-opened door, Queen Mother of the West). Even the so called "life scenes" (harvesting, processing the harvest, and storing it, hunting, feeding animals, weaving, etc.), initially thought of as plain descriptions of everyday activities, and specific animals such as cranes or rams, can be associated to seasons, directions, rhythms and propitious moments.⁸¹ Seasonality or cyclical time and directionality thus interweave to create the atmosphere of the tomb, and convey an ideal, harmonic model of human activity. The tomb occupant is often represented as both an agent in the scenes and a spectator of this ideal world, and generally holds the main role in the tomb space. Within the harmonized space of the tomb, the deceased accesses an ideal state - to become immortal - which reconciles cosmological rules and the mobile character of life.

The idea of visual culture has grown in the last decades to encompass virtually everything that can be perceived, so that no scholar working with visual or material culture can afford to ignore the question of perception and historical contingencies that govern the senses. In Eastern Han funerary art, a pool of common cultural references was mobilized by the viewer. To reach a better understanding of this language, several questions need to be asked, from object's conception to its reception. How did the craftsman proceed from design to execution, and to what extent were the viewers conscious of the potential rules behind the making of a funerary object? What was the quest behind a funerary space, image or artefact? To

⁸⁰ Nickel 2012.

⁸¹ These insights were provided by Alex Liu and other participants of a salon on Eastern Han funerary art, at CtaiTai Space, Beijing, 13 June 2016.

draw correspondences between a certain idea of the afterlife and its materialization in funerary art, this study approached making in its experimental dimension, and reception in its sensorial aspect.

In theoretical terms, addressing the relationship between carvings south of the Yangzi and their provincial or imperial homologues goes beyond formal comparison. The different nature of the evidence, in both cultural and sociological terms, necessitates a re-think about current methods of interpretation for Han funerary art. As noted by Tanner in his comparison of the mausoleum of Halicarnassus with the Qin terracotta army, the comparative study of funerary art requires a middle ground between art historical and archaeological approaches.⁸² As opposed to strict formal analysis or a focus on the sole social function of art, Tanner promotes agency theory, or the anthropology of art, as a viable theoretical framework to seize social relations *via* objects. Agency is here conferred to the work of art: the intention is attributed to the object, which triggers an emotional response. The skill or the technology resides in how objects are able to play an active role, regardless of their simple craftsmanship. Tanner equates the mirror relation established by Qin funerary art between life and death to the relationship between reality and representation. He insists on the “insensible transition” or “blurred boundary” sought in Qin funerary art:⁸³ this is where he places the virtuoso skill and technology of enchantment associated with these works of art. While mimesis is present cross-culturally, for portraiture for example,⁸⁴ in ancient Chinese conceptions of the afterlife the equation is systematically extended to all domains of material culture. Funerary environments become a privileged field for pictorial and spatial experimentation. Not only do imperial tombs function as underground palaces, but the empire itself, from the wealthy province to the remote frontier, gradually responds to cosmological models elaborated in tombs. As compared to early imperial funerary ensembles, the late Han tombs studied here feature pictorial representation on a popular level. Our funerary images are a form of expression and a commodity accessible to the greater number. Cosmological elements such as the four animals standing for cardinal directions, the sun and moon, the gate of heaven, etc, rub shoulders with mythological figures and anecdotic scenes related to the

⁸² Tanner 2013.

⁸³ Tanner 2013:69.

⁸⁴ Tanner 2007.

transmission of oral traditions and the rhythm of rural festivals. These are a first-hand source on late Han “common” or “popular religion”. The question raised by depictions south of the Yangzi is how systematic and extended this common religion was, at the fall of the Han.

8.6. Summary: Main characteristics of Type 2 depictions

In line with the typological differences noticed in the previous chapter, depictions south of the Yangzi differ from what one would expect in Han tombs. Here, in the south, the tomb is not necessarily a strict metaphor for the house. While domestic themes are abandoned, fragments of the ritual, cosmological and mythological repertoire found in Han tombs are still present. What has been provided above is an analysis of how systematic these elements can be, how certain motifs are prioritised and acquire a structural role or are instead abbreviated.

The iconography south of the Yangzi maintains a small set of recognizable Type 1 Eastern Han motifs, together with Type 2 motifs that can show consistency across the study area. Some motifs retain core elements of Eastern Han funerary ideology, such as the *que* tower gate or “heavenly gate” as a reference to the itinerary of the soul. The *que* still hold a core position in Type 2 burials in terms of frequency, size and degree of relief. However, they often stand alone and out of context, suggesting that their meaning, shape and function underwent changes. Because of modifications in the way they are represented, such images seem to refer more to a substrate of “common religion” with occasional borrowings from myths well-known elsewhere, such as the bow tie-like *sheng*, rather than to a functioning ideological system. This argument was made for an early image of the Buddha carved in an antechamber in Mahao, Leshan city. The Buddha image is part of a decorative programme framed by pseudo wooden architecture, alternating with subjects as diverse as an animal mask, a fishing scene, etc.⁸⁵ The randomness in subject matters suggest that the image functioned merely like an “auspicious” sign, not necessarily carrying a specific religious message or indicating the faith of the tomb owners in Buddhism.

⁸⁵ Wu Hung 1986:266-7.

Some images found only south of the Yangzi, especially human figures, refer to a complete other set of representational rules, not necessarily developed along contemporaneous Han pictorial art. Finally, a variety of motifs are only found in single occurrences, suggesting local or even individual developments.

In terms of technique, depictions that can be related to contemporaneous iconography found in burials across the Eastern Han empire are often “transferred” from high or low relief to two-dimensional line carvings. Borrowed images survive, but schematized and assembled in outdoor panels on the bare cliffs, in a technical expression closer to rock art. As we have seen, provided that they were not produced at an earlier stage in the region, the rock-cut caves imply the use of iron chisels, thus the adoption of a technology coming from the Sichuan basin. However, this technology did not come with its whole repertoire of forms and did not imply total acceptance of function. This is all the more obvious when it comes to depictions, of which only a small portion, coined “outliers” in this chapter, necessitates a certain know-how and sculptural skills.

Moving on from architectural elements related to the threshold and inner organization of the funerary space, Section 3 demonstrated that recessed doors, *que* tower gates and *dougong* bracket sets underwent comparable processes of adaptation from Type 1 to Type 2 caves. Dressing patterns on cave walls are another type of carving which structure the space of the cave and help us relate the most often encountered “floating” motifs in Type 2 caves to spatially ordered furnishing of Eastern Han burial chambers. Part of the carvings’ visual dynamism can be attributed to the specificity of rock-cutting techniques in sandstone, but it also appears as a deliberate strategy. The distribution of motifs both inside the tomb and outside the entrance differentiates Type 2 carvings from other rock-cut cemeteries in the Sichuan basin. Intermediary or mixed types in Qigedong for example, show how the spatial order of depictions is looser in Type 2 caves, but also how visibility, rather than iconographic accuracy, becomes an essential requirement.

The question of visibility relates to the context of viewing. The function of funerary depictions is always ambiguous, as it is addressed to an uncertain audience: to what extent are they designed for the community of the living who view the burial from the

outside and perhaps visit it regularly, and to what extent are they meant to construct a burial space as a hermetic whole? The execution of Type 2 carvings is at times so rough, that it makes one wonder whether these were supposed to be seen at all, or whether the mere act of producing an inscription was enough. The variation in their style and technological simplicity suggest *ad hoc* solutions designed with few constraints, by agents who had been exposed to, and chose to selectively borrow, a range of influences. However, the repetition of specific subject matters in specific locations betray their essential function in the funerary sphere. Some depictions seem to concentrate around the tomb entrance. In a few occurrences, like those in Shuanghetang, depictions are directly carved on the traces of an unfinished cave, while in other cases they are overcut by the cave openings, such as in Qigongzui and Guanzhuangkou. Depictions could thus precede the burial cave, perhaps as a way to mark a specific location on the cliff to state one's intention to build a cave on that very spot. As we will see in the next chapter, inscriptions are never overcut, and all seem to refer directly to the cave they are attached to. Their content refers to the building event, suggesting a more direct relation to the world of the living. Only one inscription in Qigedong refers to the depiction of a line-carved tower rather than to the tomb. As we have seen, similar towers in assembled stones were used in Han tombs to mark the location of a tomb on the burial ground above the chamber, so that the tower depiction in Qigedong, even without any attached cave, might be the metaphor for a building event worth recording in written form.

9 Discussion

This penultimate chapter summarises the main findings from each preceding chapter and provides the necessary wider discursive cement towards a conclusion. The discussion is structured around the categories of evidence listed in chapter 3, and developed in chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Via attention to land use and the proto-historical geography offered in chapters 4 and 5, a comparative definition of Type 1 and Type 2 burials emerges. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 identified the cultural markers of the Type 2 funerary tradition as an alternative to the idea of “Han tombs”. Chapter 9 brings together that evidence into one narrative, looking to paint a more vivid picture of the cave builders and their transformative actions on the landscape. It does so by evoking the role of these tomb-makers, understood as historical agency rather than a passively carried identity.

9.1 Comparative definition of Type 1 and Type 2 cemeteries and caves

This section explores the differences and potential continuities between Type 1 and Type 2 burials in terms of clustering, cemetery size, visibility and tomb shape. The terms “Type 1” and “Type 2” have been instruments of comparison throughout the whole thesis, but the definition of these categories should not be essentialized.

9.1.1 Relationship to the land

Throughout the Eastern Han Empire and regardless of tomb building technology, wealthy tomb patrons seemed to make bigger and more ornate tombs outside of larger cemeteries, possibly connected to the land they owned. Large-sized cemeteries in the plains, such as Shaogou 燒溝 in the vicinity of the Eastern Han imperial capital Luoyang, feature tombs of average dimensions and craftsmanship.¹ The most elaborate tomb in Shaogou does not match the out-of-cemetery, isolated tomb in the vicinity of Luoyang. This is generally also true for rock-cut cemeteries. Xinjin 新津 for example, occupies several hills with a total of tens of thousands of caves, making it into the biggest rock-cut cemetery excavated so far in the vicinity of the Eastern Han provincial seat Chengdu. Only one among the caves in Xinjin can be called monumental, with its

¹ Luoyang team 1959.

26m long axial corridor.² The most elaborate tomb in Xinjin, however, does not match the ornate tombs of Santai,³ which are isolated from one another of several kilometres. As verified in sections 4.2 and 4.3 of Chapter 4, Type 1 cemeteries in the Sichuan basin respond to the same clustering and hierarchy as Eastern Han cemeteries elsewhere in the empire.

On a lesser scale, and with other means mobilised to express social status or attachment to the land, the logic can be extended to Type 2 rock-cut cemeteries south of the Yangzi, which distribution was investigated in sections 5.2 and 5.3 of Chapter 5. In the Qi river valley, we have seen that apart from Xinlanqiao, big cemeteries are not the norm and when cave groups exceed five, they tend to be spaced out (10+km apart). While we have no settlement data for the area, we noticed that cemeteries near portage towns or essential sections of the route network such as in the Zhenxi valley make a less boastful display of identities and show major affinity to Type 1 burials as compared to Type 2 cemeteries in side valleys such as the Qingxi tributary. The strategic location of caves in the visible landscape, which is the most obvious aspect of Type 2 caves, is thus only one dimension of their spatial distribution that indicates communities with a different relationship to the land and involved in different activities.

We know that the system of land tenure in the Central Plains underwent a transformation in Eastern Han times, large estates covering 65% of all cultivated land, and more than half of the population becoming landless tenant farmers.⁴ A closer look at the type of resource concerned in our minor tributaries south of the Yangzi excludes large landed estates based solely on rice cultivation, which was most flourishing in the Sichuan Basin. Instead, our canyon-and-plateau landscape interrupted by mountainous stretches suggests a mixed type of subsistence, with a seasonal use of the alluvial plains (*ba*), and limited surfaces of cultivated land on the terraces (*ping*), with fishing and hunting holding an important position. Additionally, wood and rare resources from the area (cinnabar, for example) or exotic products from further south, such as betel from Yue 越, could be efficiently transported to the Sichuan basin downstream by water or

² Chengdu team 2016.

³ Erickson 2003.

⁴ Brown 2007:62-3.

land route. In medieval times, tea produced in the highlands will be transported to the navigable Yangzi on horseback.

Because the strong presence of the caves in the landscape mark the establishment of a specific group, they could express the legitimation of exclusive or shared control of water or land resource by the groups who built them. The most often-cited theory used to support this argument is the “Saxe-Goldstein Hypothesis #8.A” (underlined terms are detailed in the footnote):

“To the degree that corporate group rights to use and/or control crucial but restricted resource(s) are attained and/or legitimated by lineal descent from the dead (i.e. lineal ties to the ancestors), such groups will, by the popular religion and its ritualization, regularly reaffirm the lineal corporate group and its rights. One means of ritualization that is often but not always employed is the maintenance of a permanent, specialized, bounded area for the exclusive disposal of the dead.”⁵

Specific features of the landscape, covered in section 6.2 of Chapter 6, might have determined the sites’ locations in the first place, but the sites have in turn permanently transformed this very landscape, producing secondary effects on their users and viewers. If several generations acted on the same site, the consequences of emplacing a cave went beyond the single moment of individual choice. As suggested by the epigraphic evidence reviewed in Chapter 7, the cave itself, as a permanent structure, might serve other purposes long after its function as a container for the corpse. Apart from preserving the memory of a dead relative, the cave is also the result of a concerted action from a living group, also referred to as the “tomb owning group”.⁶ The group has concrete duties in maintaining and transmitting its property, i.e. the caves, which “use value” or even “exchange value” might gradually divorce them from their intrinsic value in terms of production effort. Such a group, embedded in the landscape, gradually translates genealogy into “topogeny”, expressing affiliation through geographic proximity.⁷ In this respect, the structure of the cemetery mirrors that of the village, or the living community.⁸

⁵ Goldstein 1976:61. “Corporate groups” are meant as “groups that function as individuals in relation to property” (ex: lineage or descent groups), “crucial but restricted resource(s)” consist in land (arable, pasture, forest) to water (fishing rights, communication), cattle, trees and traded materials. “One means of ritualization that is often but not always employed” reminds us that other means may have been employed.

⁶ Bloch 197:122.

⁷ The definition of topogeny is taken from Fox 2006:89.

⁸ Brown 1995:10-11.

The analogy between the domestic space of the living and the afterlife residence for the dead, acknowledged for Han tombs in the Central Plains, might still be valid for Type 1 caves in the Sichuan basin, in the Yangzi gorges and along major tributaries south of the Yangzi, which are furnished with rock-cut stoves and wells and are richly decorated indoors. However, such characteristics are absent from my study area, whose caves are small and display outdoor carvings. While the relation between burials and settlements remains largely unaddressed in this study, because no settlement has been excavated in the area yet, the Type 2 caves and cemeteries potentially build a different connection between the tomb owners and the space of the living.

9.1.2 Securing the tomb

Rock-cut cavities were conspicuously placed in the local canyon-and-plateau landscape, which led to their early looting, abandonment and occasional re-use. Their visibility was enforced by the addition of recessed cave openings, inscriptions in Chinese writing, and outdoor depictions. Such visibility suggests that the living were close enough to the cemeteries to protect and take care of them, a tight and secure relationship which apparently did not last for long, making way for subsequent looting.

A comparison with the model of “Han tombs” brings about possible alternative attitudes to death, or a potentially different treatment of the dead. Apart from the monumental rock-cut antechambers of the Min river course shown in section 4.2.3 of Chapter 4, visible cave entrances are absent for common rock-cut cemeteries in both the Sichuan basin and the Yangzi gorges. In the rest of the empire, tombs generally remain hidden. Tombs of wealthy people, but also commoners, were always furnished with artefacts, and tomb robbing has a long history in ancient China. From the emperor to the commoner, each and every subject who would built a tomb, would think about protection and discretion. Constant concern about being robbed is expressed in funerary inscriptions and transmitted texts of the time, even more so in the late Eastern Han.⁹ By contrast to these concerns essential in Han funerary ideology, the builders of Type 2 caves felt secure enough not to hide their tombs, did not fear robbery, or had good reasons to think they would not be robbed. A potential

⁹ Brashier 2011:176. Timeline extra 10.

explanation for such sense of security could be the immediate proximity of settlements, which would allow relatives to constantly look after the cemeteries and protect them. Yet, no artefact was found, caves are not equipped with the kind of niches which usually house artefacts, and doorframes are generally devoid of sealing devices. It is possible that nothing was placed inside the tomb, no riches or objects for the afterlife, and that this fact was enough to discourage robbers. This last point would be one more argument showing that Type 2 burials do not intent to reproduce a domestic context in the afterlife, unlike Han tombs.

If we follow the argument that the furnishing of the burial are not the subjects' main concern, the body and tomb itself and the effort invested in it should represent the actual value, a value that can hardly be robbed. Conversely, as we have seen in the potential case of cave sale recorded in the Sanchahe inscription in section 7.1.4 of Chapter 7, a cave can be sold and re-used. More directly, as we can witness today, most cave burials have been reconverted into storage spaces or otherwise by local villagers. The cave itself being this unmoveable value, its owners can feel secure enough to make it totally visible, ostentatious, perhaps even with doors made in perishable materials and painted in colourful tones that did not survived to this day. Another value attached to the tomb is that of storing the body and maintaining it accessible to the living, in proximal contact, possibly to be opened repeatedly over time. The cave, in that sense, is not an eternal abode, but a temporary location, a passage, where the body of the dead remains within arms reach as something the relatives can capitalize on.¹⁰ To summarize, the cave with its content, the body, is valuable in itself, it represents legitimacy over both worldly and otherworldly territories.

9.1.3 Individual caves

One major contribution of this study, it might be argued, has been to establish in section 6.3.2 of Chapter 6 that the niche-like caves found in Type 2 cemeteries, previously attributed to Tang or Song times (between the 7th and 12th centuries CE),

¹⁰ The accessibility of commoners' burials in the vicinity of Eastern Han times' capital Luoyang is increasingly under scrutiny. The addition of side corridors for relatives to access the tomb and perform funerary rituals in the chamber has been noted in a few occasions. Accessibility, however, remains private and is not advertised as it is the case for Type 2 caves. Zhou Ligang 2016.

were in fact systematically used in the Eastern Han period. While no remarkable difference in technology and effort was noticed between niches and small-sized chambers, the former's aperture is even wider and uneasy to seal. By their volume, the niches suggest a different conception of the lineage, kin relationships, family structure and a different conception of the individual's place in those. Even if we were to see groups of two to three burials as belonging to one transgenerational family or to close relatives, as some inscriptions suggest, the niches add typological diversity within such small groups. They point at individual distinctions rather than group identity. Even if we were to see the Qi river caves as ossuaries or collective tombs, they still lack the house-like and familial layout of Type 1 caves.

The niche-like caves did not go unnoticed by Segalen, who coined those *logettes*, and saw them as an intermediary between caves and coffins, a secondary development proper to Sichuan and shown in section 4.2.4 of Chapter 4. Because of the private space they confer to the individual, niche-like caves recall the use of stone coffins.¹¹ The use of stone coffins can be traced at least to the Western Han, and it is most probably directly derived from its wooden counterpart. According to Segalen, quarries where stone coffins were processed were possibly the place from where the idea of rock-cut tombs originated, the latter being a convenient way to avoid the complicated requirements of quarried coffins in term of stone quality and transportation. He notices that just like in elite burials, the outer coffin (*guo* 槨) is usually decorated on its inside and inner coffin (*guan* 棺) on its outside, the cliff tomb is decorated on its inside, while the coffin is decorated on its outside. Wu Hung mentioned the paradoxical functions of coffins, which both should shield the body and be "transparent" enough to allow the soul to travel further.¹² In niche-like caves, which potentially recall the idea of a coffin, decoration is mainly exported to the outdoor cliff face. Carved depictions on the back walls of niches are perceptible from the foot of the cliff. Outdoor line carvings commonly found in Type 2 cemeteries south of the Yangzi are generally absent from their Type 1 corollaries. Niche-like caves are an innovation that could reconcile the conflicting function of Han tombs and coffins, by leaving aside the

¹¹ The concomitant use of chambers and coffins has been presented as the combination collective and individual identity. Xuan Chen 2015:91.

¹² Wu Hung 2012:198-199.

domestic metaphor and instead, paralleling the riverine cliffs with otherworldly destinations.

9.2 Innovation and borrowing in Type 2 carvings

Observations drawn from the caves' dimensions in section 6.3.1 and the experiment in replicating a cave in section 6.5 of Chapter 6, as well as, more generally, from the inscriptions and depictions found in Type 2 caves and the overall distribution of Type 2 caves' features allow us to provide a definition for the type of production at hand.

Groups of two or three stone masons are sufficient for the carving of a single cave, as larger groups would hinder each other's movements. About a week of full time work are necessary for the carving of small-sized caves, while the bigger caves would necessitate about a month of work. The work potentially took place in moments of the agricultural year when villagers would be allowed free time and greater mobility (section 7.1.6 of Chapter 7). If the rhythm of production followed agricultural seasons, instead of the pressure of demand, it is more likely that we are looking at a domestic type of production, rather than a professional craft market.¹³ This can also be deduced from the scale of the caves. For bigger tasks, like the 20m long Type 1 antechambers of the lower Min River in the Sichuan basin (sections 4.2.3 of Chapter 4 and 7.1.2 of Chapter 7), an element of economic, political or ritual control might have motivated the construction of the caves. Instead, for the single cavities south of the Yangzi, which constitute the object of this study, the unit of production could have been the family or even the individual. Domestic production would have an impact on the consistency of a tradition, since occasional work from family members follows different patterns of transmission than specialized workshops.¹⁴ One family with better stone-mason skills per village would suffice to cover the time frame known for sites with several inscriptions such as Baishulin or Qigedong, especially if the caves are being re-used (section 7.1.7 of Chapter 7).

Additionally, one can imagine small groups of carvers travelling from one village to another along a single tributary (such as the Qingxi), or moving to a more densely

¹³ Goody 1989:243.

¹⁴ Goody 1989:233-266.

populated area with major demand (such as the Zhenxi). If the prices mentioned in the inscriptions are realistic (section 7.1.4 of Chapter 7), this would be a major incentive for mobility. For Eastern Han assembled stone tombs in the Central Plains, inscriptions state that for local private enterprises such as Xiangtajun shrine (152 CE), two of the workers came from a place situated 100km away. In Imperial projects such as Liu Yan (54-90 CE)'s tomb in Zhongshan, more than half of masons, most probably conscript labourers, came from locations distant 300 to 440km away.¹⁵ The scale and technology involved in Type 2 caves south of the Yangzi suggest a much smaller range of interaction for the rock-cutting craft, of perhaps 30km, the distance between nodes of the route network. Motifs, however, occasionally are shown to travel greater distances, but in a more sporadic way.

Experimental observations made in sections 6.4 and 6.5 of Chapter 6 suggest that quarrying skills are enough to achieve the main stylistic feature of the caves – recessed doors – and no long apprenticeship is needed to transmit the craft, as the simple observation of existing examples would suffice. The distribution of certain motifs integrated to indoor wall dressing, such as indoor towers (Jingzhuwan) or ceiling ornaments (Shibantan, Shilongba) along the Jian'an River, point at a spatial scale of about 30km wide for the communities of practice at hand.

The carving of outdoor inscriptions and depictions instead, which are mostly line-carved, does not necessitate quarrying skills, and their stylistic variation on a case-to-case basis, insisted upon in section 8.2 of Chapter 8, suggests great individual freedom with respects to models. The carvings are divorced from the carving sequence of a cave, can be added over time, precede the cave (overcut examples) or placed on unfinished caves. This aspect would depend more on the client's agenda than on the mason's choices.

As a result of these observations, Type 2 cemeteries are defined as belonging to a cultural trend which led to a dispersed kind of production by local cave-making practices. Complex achievements such as Type 1 antechambers in the Sichuan basin are more likely to belong to a strict tradition escaping local dynamics, following the say

¹⁵Barbieri-Low 2007:133-4.

that it is “easier to move the carver than the stone”. Expert carvers are mobile, leaving local humble jobs for the others.¹⁶ The Type 1 stone working tradition functioned vertically on many levels, from region to town, sometimes encountering sudden horizontal linkage through aggregation on bigger projects. Following topographically hierarchized, regionally diversified, technologically and iconographically complex Type 1 traditions, a wider movement of Type 2 local cave-making practices took over. The Type 2 tradition was formed by a constellation of local small-scale projects on a wider geographic scale, albeit limited to areas of sandstone availability. It is probable that Type 1 projects later emulated the Type 2 trend. However, the extent of Type 2 cemeteries covers a greater area than specific Type 1 regional traditions ever did and their visual identity, despite its simplicity, shows a greater uniformity. The multitude of local cave-making practices form a looser type of supralocal tradition.

9.2.2 Recessed doors

A salient characteristic of Type 2 caves is the recessed door, addressed in section 6.4 of Chapter 6. By their crisp geometric contours, recessions produce a stark figure/ground contrast on the cliffs that impacts the viewer from afar. The door acts as a visual signal, adding depth and relief to the cave openings even in the misty weather of the Southwest, where according to a popular saying “dogs bark when the sun comes”. These visual signals advertise a presence and capture the landscape around, adding a focal point in the theatre-like river meanders. The recessed door is an opportunistic signal, as it exploits the cliff and by extension, it uses the whole mountain as a background with almost effortless ease. Adding those sharply defined doors to cliffs chosen for their spectacular location is indeed an undemanding way to reach monumentality. In terms of visual hierarchy, as concluded in section 8.3.1 of Chapter 8, the deeply cut recessed door dominates all other depictions, even the large towers (*que* 闕), which come second in order of size and relief. The recessed doorframes are a privileged support for carved depictions, conferring them more structure than when they are dispersed on the cliff face or on the cave walls. The recessed door is one more step in the construction of an alternative spatial, architectural and sculptural vocabulary that serves a novel version of the funerary space. The functional and symbolic equivalent for recessed doors in Type 1 cave burials were respectively

¹⁶ Rockwell 1993:98.

identified as the trench leading to the tomb of the tomb corridor and the motif of the half-opened door. The recessed door combines the idea of cutting a space in the rock, and tunnelling the mountain, acting as a practical and metaphorical threshold for Type 2 funerary spaces.

9.2.3 Carved depictions

As reviewed in section 8.1 of Chapter 8, Han funerary art fits narrative scenes and motifs into a tight architectural setting, at times adding inscriptions in cartouches that elucidate their pictorial content. Han period art from the Sichuan basin, carved into the organic shapes of sandstone rather than sharp limestone, lacks the crystalline order and didacticism of Han funerary art. It is more spontaneous and makes a virtuoso use of relief unknown elsewhere in the empire. Its crowded arrangements combine familiar scenes from the Han repertoire with naturalistic representations of animals and landscapes. Finally, on the frontier south of the Yangzi, figures are floating freely in space spread on the outdoor cliff. They feature a direct, performative aspect close to the visual language of rock art. Carved depictions south of the Yangzi thus differ in composition and content from depictions found in Type 1 tombs, and distance themselves from normative meaning attributed to Eastern Han funerary art.

The main characteristics of Type 2 depictions laid out in section 8.2 of Chapter 8 are the following:

- Frequent depictions are multivalent and play a structural role.
- Themes related to the travel of the soul are preferred as compared to references to the domestic sphere.
- Depictions are also placed outside the tomb, or at the door entrance, and their visibility is a matter of concern. An overall hierarchy in importance is expressed by the size of the motifs and the depth of the reliefs.

Some elements common to all regions of the empire constitute a Han system of representation, but in a frontier context they are generally filtered through selective borrowing by local communities. Among those, directional animals and heavenly references such as the *que* towered gates evoke the immutability of imperial order. South of the Yangzi, however, the red bird of the south alone is found, often

represented as a peacock or a crane, and a single *que* tower is found, which does not form a gate. Such an “incomplete” set of cosmological or heavenly symbols seems to retain only a selected fraction of the Han system of representation. Specific mythological figures are more present in Sichuanese funerary art than in Han funerary art in general, in particular the figure of the Queen Mother of the West. The influence of Sichuanese millenarian sects, however, does not seem to act on its southern frontier, where only fragmentary references to the myth are found. In all of the surveyed Type 2 caves, the Shihutou, Qikongzi Heba and Qigedong sites hold the only direct iconographical references to the Queen Mother of the West and the Fuxi-and-Nuwa couple holding the sun and moon, as well as a three-dimensional representation of a phoenix. Shihutou in the Zhenxi valley was probably attached to a portage town, and Qigedong is nested in a mountainous enclave of the Luzhou plain: both locations occupy an intermediate position between plain and highland cultures.

Representations of fishes, horses and chariots are also found throughout the empire. They evoke the funerary sphere in its sacrificial or processional dimension, rather than its domestic dimension, and they are almost systematically present south of the Yangzi. To this common substratum, Type 2 caves add boats, bodiless heads and dancing figures, which might evoke local variations of the funerary activities of local communities. Finally, naturalistic landscape representation, another salient trait of Sichuanese funerary art that differs from other regions of the empire, is totally absent south of the Yangzi. However, Type 2 cemeteries might have evoked a form of otherworldly landscape by their very structure, as illustrated by a series of clay models commented upon in section 8.5.2 of Chapter 8.

In Type 2 carvings, some randomly selected Chinese elements, not necessarily the most important in the culture where they originated, are found in varying proportion and their order and shape is often altered. Most probably, the deceased cumulated more than one identity, willingly blurring distinctions between the Han system of representation and local or individual expressions. As it has been said for memorial and funerary monuments belonging to marginal groups of the Roman Empire, these were a medium for expressing integration, both real and aspired to, into the Roman world. Groups located on the periphery of Roman society were thereby able to

negotiate their identity in flexible terms despite the fact that there was no simple or one-dimensional definition of what it was to be Roman.¹⁷ Type 2 pictorial production is multivalent in the sense that it generates intermediate forms and sometimes awkward encounters between Han iconography and local expressions, negotiated through technological and stylistic choices. Depictions south of the Yangzi raise the question of the viewers' visual literacy. As they combine Han and local pictorial systems, they suggest that their audience was familiar with both systems of representation. The makers, patrons and viewers could manipulate symbols, translating them from one visual language to another.

If one renounces the idea that art forms correlate directly to identity or ethnicity, concepts such as Sinicization or, in other contexts, Romanization or Hellenization, must be questioned. The adoption of Han material culture by provincials and frontier groups does not necessarily correspond to an identification with the Han Empire and a legitimization of imperial power. Starting in the Western Han era, the objects of everyday use definitely penetrated "metropolises" along major tributaries such as the Chishui River and are found in Type 1 cemeteries. First-level tributary inhabitants probably considered themselves as citizens of the Han Empire, perhaps because they benefitted from special tax status or encouragement to settle in the area. Meanwhile, local communities along second-order tributaries were probably freer to compose an identity of their own, although they were in contact with the art and artefacts in circulation along all southern trade routes. By the late Eastern Han era, Han representational forms would have become familiar to them, and their direct adoption, re-use or reinterpretation proved useful when at the dusk of the Han, local communities looked for new forms of expression.

9.2.4 Epigraphic inscriptions

In Chapter 7, the content and shape of the inscriptions associated with man-made caves in the Yangzi area was compared to inscriptions found in multi-chambered caves or on moveable supports such as coffins, steles and gates in the Sichuan basin. This comparison provided us with a set of observations regarding the builders and owners of Type 2 caves. The epigraphy found in Type 2 caves south of the Yangzi is not as

¹⁷ Hope 1997:103-121.

elaborate in terms of content and calligraphic quality as funerary inscriptions found in the Sichuan basin or the Central Plains. In the latter, even lower status identities are advertised and beautified by the use of writing. Writing is capitalized as a mark of culture and officialdom, thus a synonym for symbolic power and status. Although the practice of associating epigraphic inscriptions to burials can be compared to the conventionalized frame of reference of Eastern Han epitaphs, Type 2 inscriptions cannot be fully considered as epitaphs. They do not contain this mixture of curriculum vitae and details specific to the individuals, characteristic of “social biographies” common in the Central Plains¹⁸ and still present in the province, like in Taliangzi.¹⁹ South of the Yangzi, the deceased are only referred to within kin relationships or by honorific titles, without any mention of official titles or specialized activities, suggesting a domestic, private type of production. Unlike the Type 1 epigraphic material, the Type 2 inscriptions do not relate to precise historical events but they still address the essential question of dating and provide a time frame for the wider rock-cut cave phenomenon. This allowed us to place it in a bigger historical narrative, and to bridge and compare spatially distant sites.

Apart from their calendrical aspect, the inscriptions seem to have had a more practical function. Some of them record a manufacturing price and systematically contain a name and date, suggesting that they played either a contractual or a dedicatory role in the cave-making process. When taken as a record of carving gestures in their own right, the inscriptions show evidence for different dynamics of production, with minor planning in the execution of cliff caves than for quarried stone items. Sites with more than one inscription, such as Qigedong, Baishulin and Qigongzui, provide chronological indicators to reconstruct the sequence of actions that led to the accumulations of caves visible today. On a smaller temporal scale with respects to History, such marks help us to think of the site in terms of successive individual, small-scale interventions and their permanence in the landscape.

Lastly, we have to ask why the craftsmen themselves made use of epigraphy in an area where no other inscriptions were uncovered for the time period. Type 2 tombs with

¹⁸ Brashier 1996:146.

¹⁹ Refer to Table B11 in Appendix to Chapter 7: Inscriptions Table.

epigraphy are not particularly different from tombs that are left uninscribed. On the contrary, some of the most elaborate tombs are not inscribed. The random aspect of inscriptions south of the Yangzi would lead one to think that writing is not considered as a status marker in the area, and that the patrons do not respond to cultural values valid in the Central Plains in this regard. Cases where writing seems to be invested with strong ritual significance south of the Yangzi like in Qigedong or Songlingang, show alternative uses of literacy. They do not follow the mainstream functions of epigraphy. Craftsmen who possessed a limited knowledge of Chinese script could still have been migrants from the plain, working for rich local patrons who did not adhere to the same values regarding the use of epigraphy. Alternatively, inscribed Type 2 tombs were the products of a minority of semi-literate patrons belonging to the wider, blurred circle of Han culture, who wished to make a vague cultural reference to epitaphs found in Han tombs, without necessarily being representative of the finest burials.

9.3 Reconstructing a proto-historical geography

To the image of imperial occupation along the Yangzi main course and its major tributaries, which includes all areas where Type 1 burials are found, this section confronts a salient find of my research: the consistency in type and the distribution of Type 2 burials over a 500km belt south of the Yangzi. This section proposes potential motivations behind the wide and strategic distribution of Type 2 burials.

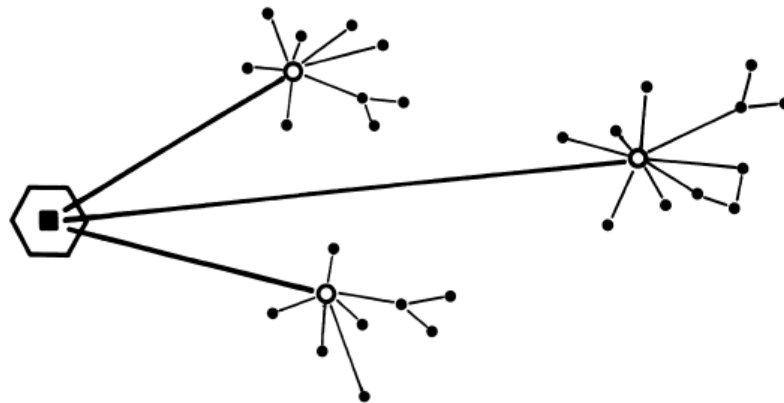
9.3.1 Gateway Communities

The centralized administration implanted in the Sichuan basin since the Qin period, for example ancient Jiangyang (section 4.2.4), contrasts with the network of Type 1 routes departing from important connection nodes on the Yangzi, such as the ancient Fu pass, and reaching gateway locations, such as the Huangjinwan site (section 4.3.1), towards highland hubs such as Bi. Huangjinwan could be a good example of what Hirth calls a “gateway community”, a form of socioeconomic organization that emerges with the intensification of interregional exchange.²⁰ When located at strategic points to control and facilitate the flow of merchandises, gateway communities start prospering by acting as an interface between external trade routes and major markets. The external trade routes form a hierarchic or “dendritic” network, which connects the core area (in

²⁰ Hirth 1978:36.

our case, the Sichuan basin), to one or several gateway communities, supplied by the hinterland (**Fig.8.1**):

“These hinterlands look much like elongated fans, which radiate outward from their respective gateways. Individual communities throughout the hinterland are linked to the gateway community via a linear or dendritic market network. Dendritic networks are characteristic of many primitive economic systems and frequently are found in areas where the population is dispersed, transportation is difficult or underdeveloped, and where there is a strong external economic orientation. In these systems, individual centers are linked directly to the gateway by exchange relationships. Dendritic networks may transcend political boundaries; the centers within them may be completely autonomous and may interact very little with other centers in the hinterland.”²¹



9.1. The dendritic market network. The hexagon represents a core area, connected to several gateway communities (white circles), themselves connecting individual centres in the hinterland. Source: Hirth 1978:38.

Hirth’s model is useful in that ecological barriers, natural corridors of trade and cultural differences are factors of growth for the gateway community, while they are usually presented as an obstacle from the point of view of regional settlement in the core area. Previous to Hirth, Polanyi’s definition of a “port of trade” resonate in some of its aspects with the type of land use encountered south of the Yangzi.²³ Geographically, the port of trade functions as an enclave located on the border of two ecological regions, such as highland and plain, desert or sea. Located on the margin of a state-controlled territory, the port of trade is an interface between societies practicing different economic organizations. The port of trade is still widely resorted to when enclaves of “foreign” presence involved in complex cross-cultural trade are found in marginal locations,²⁴ which is the aspect that interests us here. However, more restrictive than the idea of a gateway community, the port of trade model

²¹ Hirth 1978:37.

²³ Polanyi 1963.

²⁴ For an application of Polanyi’s model to a politically decentralized, multi-ethnic community in a highland setting see Brown 1975.

privileges market mechanisms in the fringe as opposed to the core area. Unlike Polanyi, Hirth leaves space for change within his model, by noting that competition can arise from the hinterland and correspond to a decline of the gateways. Central places in the hinterland, can gradually come to “function as alternative gateways (...) and can weaken the vertical movement of commodities”.²⁵

What would the communities inhabiting such gateways be like? The etymology for port, comes from the Latin *portus/portare*. Indeed, the main function of a port has to do with the transportation of goods, the protection of caravans, transporters and merchants, the regulation of movement, competition and rivalry. The type of infrastructure needed include storage facilities, quays, anchorage, debarkation, transshipment, marketplace, facilities for pack-mules etc. The trade activity is administered by merchant-guardians who practice taxation and price regulation, and hold the role of a governmental trade officer. Other grounds are held by either long-distance traders, foreigners, or native farmers. The hyper-mobile figure of the trader “is resident not where he was born or where he traded, but where he died, *ubi mercatores moriantur*”.²⁹ A similar population structure with various degrees of mobility is suggested by Hansen for the trading oasis of Turfan.³⁰ Between traders moving from one oasis to another, and locally rooted independent cultivators occasionally acquiring animals or slaves, a middle ground of residents depended on trade, regulated it as government officials or worked full-time with the merchants. These populations (interpreters, inn owners, religious practitioners, etc.) adopted the port as their new homeland.

As noted above, a potential example of gateway community on the Han Empire southwest frontier is Huangjinwan, with its attached Type 1 cemeteries surveyed in section 4.3.1 of Chapter 4. Coming from the Sichuan basin and beyond, Western Han settlers brought their cities, material culture and cemeteries in the Luzhou Plain, along the Upper Yangzi and its main southern tributaries, the Chishui and Wu Rivers. Farming and fishing activities sustained growing communities along these main rivers, which represented major trade routes to the South. Han merchants looked for a direct access

²⁵ Hirth 1978:42.

²⁹ Polanyi 1963:36.

³⁰ Hansen 2005:283-284.

to local resources. The products of forestry such as wood, faunal and floral products such as horses and tea or spices, minerals such as cinnabar, as well as slaves, tributes and heavily taxed merchandises such as salt and iron artefacts, transited through the fluvial havens along the Chishui and Wu Rivers, down to the Sichuan basin. Highland groups in turn accessed salt, grain and manufactured items: the Sichuan basin functioned as granary, salt production centre, and as a major site for the extraction of raw products such as iron and the production of manufactured goods. Standardized iron products produced by large-scale state manufactures such as spade-heads, ploughshares, U-shaped spade-caps, punch, chisels, ring-handled knives, etc. are thus commonly found in Han tombs south of the Yangzi.

What is then the function of secondary tributaries where Type 2 cemeteries are found (section 5.3 in Chapter 5)? Settlements along the minor tributaries south of the Yangzi developed at a late stage of imperial presence. These were areas where a few centuries earlier, Tang Meng's expedition attempted to establish a trade route or rather failed to control an existing trade route, which long predated Han conquest. While the Han managed to secure their presence along some of the main rivers south of the Yangzi, such as in Huangjinwan, capillary alliances which pre-existed these settlements most probably continued to function in the backstage of history. Settlements along secondary tributaries started trading part of their own products to supply centres on the major tributaries. Rather than considering them as "virgin land" being colonized once and for all, they can be seen as combining pre-existing paths and offshoots of the gateway community model. Rather than acting as second-tier, local markets, these could gradually act as shortcuts to major trade routes. Secondary trade centres such as Zhenxi on the Qi River might be an example of alternative gateway (section 5.3.5 in Chapter 5). These secondary nodes in the trade network probably took over the activity of gateway communities after the collapse of the empire. Quieter waterways like the Qingxi tributary (section 5.3.4 in Chapter 5) developed into living environments of their own, either because they were dead ends, or because they were suitable for settling.³¹ Such locations retain attractive qualities that the main

³¹ Conolly and Bevan use the term "pinch-point" to describe "hyper-fragmented landscapes" that respond to the needs in mobility, political expedience and economic opportunism of local communities. In a mediterranean context, that would be strings of islands, coastal fringes with mountaineous hinterlands or nodal plces in trans-regional maritime networks. The fortune of these marginal locations is variable and

routes do not have, such as available land, outstanding landscapes, a higher character of privacy, and controllable access to other secondary routes.

When primary trade centres on the Chishui and Wu rivers established in Western Han declined, we know from funerary production that the side valleys and second order tributaries started blooming. Trade on those secondary routes, powering novel funerary expressions when the empire faced fragmentation and collapse, was probably not controlled by the imperial administration. The type of merchandise which used to be collected by the political power and redistributed, such as grain, slaves, salt and metal, is susceptible to be the basis of unofficial trade. Large scale unofficial trade was made possible by the right political moment, and its agents can be viewed as brigands or smugglers mainly from the point of view of the political centre.³² Private producers were just as controverted figures in the Chinese system of tax and tribute as private traders, often in conflict with political elites. Han period taxes on salt and iron constituted the main government revenue. They paid for state campaigns on its frontiers and represented major industries in term of wealth and workforce until the fall of the Han. State monopolies over salt and iron were controverted, because of the high prices and poor quality of state production by convict labourers. Archaeological evidence for the location of state-run furnaces shows that despite nuisances and pollution, these were located next to cities, to enforce control. In such rigid and controlled economies, alternative production and informal trade networks were necessarily present and profited from the system's inefficiencies.³³ Local iron producers are described as families of private industrialists hiring multitudes of bandits. The "brutal and tyrannical (industrialists) would follow their greedy hearts, the masses would form gangs, and individual households would form factions. The recalcitrant would become increasingly ungovernable, and among the followers of (heterodox) leaders, perverse tendencies would emerge".³⁴

With trade centres moving further south of the Yangzi, foreign traders would have access to hinterland products without having to reach down to the plain or major

fragile, as they take advantage from the larger polities they border but their rugged and interstitial land holds limited resources. Connolly and Bevan 2013:234-236.

³² For a distinction of scale and type in piratical activity see Connolly and Bevan 2013:227-228.

³³ Oka and Kusimba 2008:358-359.

³⁴ From the *Yantie lun* in Wang Liqi 1992:67, cited in Wagner 2001.

tributaries. A potential redistributive centre rising under such circumstances would be the Zhenxi valley on the upper Qi River, which stood right in-between the Chishui and Wu river routes and had privileged access to the highlands. In less well connected nodes such as the Qingxi valley on the lower Qi River, restricted exchange or a return to a form of autarky possibly took over, enhancing local particularities.

In sum, the type of context identified south of the Yangzi was a frontier area with strategic nodes on long-distance routes in rugged and enclaved terrains inhabited by gateway communities. In terms of function, minor tributaries and their inhabitants initially occupy the backstage of major political and commercial axis, forming a parallel or secondary trade network. Their activity was a natural counterpart of official trade, transcending ethnic and political boundaries, and developing in parallel to political centres.³⁵ When gaining major control over trade, they gradually lost their elusiveness and constructed their visual identity through a booty-like, mixed cultural production. The next sections focus on how imperial collapse and millenarist ideologies fuelled the production of a specific landscape, both in physical and ideological terms.

9.3.2 A network of caves across the landscape

Imperial presence inscribes new spatial relationships in the land including: boundaries and hierarchies, enclaves, the classification of people and activities, the extraction of resources and the production of a unified imaginative world. Through the mechanisms of colonial occupation,³⁶ occupied territories function as gated, peripheral and isolated enclaves. Administrative compartmentation enhances pre-existing topographical fragmentation and ethnic diversity on its margins. Contiguous areas contain radically different populations with the creation of inner frontiers between mutually exclusive spaces. At this point, funerary expressions become useful and even necessary to construct one's presence in the landscape. The dead and the spaces they occupy become resources for post-contact groups. Funerary culture and topography are combined in the process of constructing a people, a process qualified as "necropolitical" by Mbembe.³⁷

³⁵ Harnet and Dawdy 2013:38.

³⁶ Frantz Fanon cited by Mbembe Achille, (2003)2006:43.

³⁷ Mbembe (2003)2006:44.

Beyond the products of trade, a differently balanced inter-group exchange obviously led to culture change in all dimensions of life along secondary routes. Technology, religion, genes and disease followed the same routes as traded goods and so did skilled migrants, even more so in times of weakened central power. Apart from goods from the plains, highland groups acquired metal implements and monumental architecture, advantage in war, productivity and new ways to display their identity.³⁸ When settling along the secondary routes, individuals or groups were able to pursue their activity and avoid the turmoil of a collapsing empire. We could imagine groups of masons who used to be allocated the task of constructing monumental funerary architecture by elites from the Sichuan basin, who moved to secondary centres once a newly formed local elite would need such production. For the newly established population, security and the symbolic appropriation of the territory would have been a major concern. In this context, the cliff tombs might act as some kind of agreement between these groups, and between themselves and the land. The production of rock-cut cemeteries is a source of symbolic power. The merchants who became so visible on secondary trade routes in the late Eastern Han most probably did so because they did not only use the routes, but also control them, albeit on a local, fragmented scale.

Type 2 cemeteries of different kinds do not occupy a homogeneous area on a map covering the whole Upper Yangzi River course. Rather, the niched distribution of Type 2 cemeteries in select southern tributaries of the Yangzi reflects different fluxes of human movement. Type 2 funerary culture blooms under an empire on the verge of collapse, rather than developing out of the driving force of the Han administration. In response to occupied territories, internal frontiers and isolated cells, Type 2 cemeteries form their own complex fabric, distinct from zones of primary colonization in terms of their location on transportation routes. Two separated geographies coexist and overlap, occupying the same landscape.³⁹

Type 2 cemeteries are megalithic agents:⁴⁰ active material culture that attracts people to move near or away from them, concentrating specific cultural artefacts, restructuring social realities and displaying rank or affiliation. At the scale of the

³⁸ Tartaron 2001:24.

³⁹ Mbembe 2006:45.

⁴⁰ Cullen 2000:219.

visible, their distribution aims at efficacy in terms of display, surveillance or protection. Megaliths in general have been studied as territorial markers of fragmented societies,⁴¹ claims of inherited rights over land,⁴² or instruments of conversion to an agricultural way of life.⁴³ At the scale of the visible, their distribution aims at efficacy in terms of display, surveillance or protection. But essentially, the megaliths as agents imply a body of tasks (selection, carving, spatial organisation, ideology and rituals, iconography), which are stored in the brains of teachers and receivers of the tradition.⁴⁴ Cullen's "vitalist" model of megaliths as cultural viruses, much alike the "war machines" (*machines de guerre*) described by Deleuze and Guattari,⁴⁵ resonates with our web of Type 2 cemeteries, a loose but unanimous response to previous Type 1 traditions.⁴⁶ We are looking at least at three generations of rock-cutting, with cultural markers that can be traced back to pre-existing practices in the Sichuan basin. Type 2 caves and carvings adopt some of the language of imperial power, but they retain combinatory, nomadic qualities matching the specificity of the terrain and its topographic variations.

Type 2 cemeteries show that groups south of the Yangzi strategically chose their strongholds, where they displayed their presence in a permanent way. Just like public architecture, monuments and epigraphy are not necessarily a direct mark of elite authority, they can also compete with state-sponsored structures and promote other groups. Although Type 2 cemeteries do not reflect mainstream imperial funerary ideology, we cannot simply attribute them to a late or peripheral development of Han imperial culture. Some alien iconographic details scattered among the Qi River caves for example, are adopted locally, right where they fall, and do not necessarily diffuse. Borrowings can remain superficial and serve other meanings and functions, but the builders of Type 2 caves also selectively borrowed technology and a number of elements of visual culture coming from the neighbouring empire, creating their own material culture. The territory they occupied is defined negatively with respects to Han settlements, both remarkably extended on a wide scale and fragmented on a local

⁴¹ Renfrew 1981.

⁴² Chapman 1995.

⁴³ Sherratt 1990.

⁴⁴ Cullen 2000:224.

⁴⁵ Deleuze and Guattari 1980.

⁴⁶ In Cullen's terms, a vertical tradition (Type 1) becomes horizontally transmitted in a "predatory fashion". The organism implodes when it can no longer support its own weight, scattering genetic debris into other cultural lineages (Type 2) Cullen 2000:239.

scale, as if imperial and unofficial geographies coexisted in parallel and mutually exclusive ways. The two systems' intimacy, as well as the wealth and stability displayed by the builders of Type 2 caves, suggests a symbiotic relationship between these communities and the areas under imperial control.

9.3.3 Another afterlife south of the Yangzi

In addition to the socio-economic aspects of identity investigated in this thesis, this section reflected more interpretatively on the identity of the deceased as deceased, in all its imaginary potential. Along with the production of identities, the synesthetic effort made in tomb and cemetery design produced an alternative time and space, re-locating the deceased as a new subject. Notions of space and time are culturally and historically constructed. This is all the more true for funerary space, a hermetically closed unit designed to encapsulate its own gravity and message. Type 2 cemeteries south of the Yangzi pursue this objective well beyond the limits of the burial chamber.

The series of artificial mountains detailed in Chapter 8 seems to act as a blueprint for our cliff cemeteries of the late 2nd to 3rd centuries AD, in the kind of micro-macro homology dear to Han period philosophy. As mentioned in Chapter 2, religious activity reached a peak in late Eastern Han Sichuan and some sects generated their own types of territorial divisions, taxation and calendar. Terraforming a new land would have been part of the agenda of such groups. South of the Yangzi, the fragments of empire and its runaway agents encountered different mind-sets and topographies, gradually reformulating funerary conceptions. For incomers, the impact of protohistorical cliff burial sites predating Han presence in the region might have resonated with their own vision of the afterlife. Through the production of rock-cut cemeteries these conceptions mutually enforced one another.

The question is then not so much whether the "tomb/house metaphor" was still valid to the Han period frontier, or if a "tomb/cave metaphor" was prevalent, but rather how these metaphors were made to coexist. It is remarkable that at the level of interregional or global history, competing views on space and time can also lead to negotiated, innovative forms of funerary landscapes. Predatory cosmologies are exported and transmitted through trade and cultural exchange routes, such as the

Buddhist stupa from its Indian beginnings to its central Asian, Chinese or southeast Asian counterparts. A similar fortune favoured the otherworldly landscapes formulated under the Han dynasty. It has been argued that Western Han ornamental combinations of cloud patterns, animals and figures into landscape representation, absorbed elements of northern steppes animal style art.⁵⁸ The holistic mountain was a system to be adopted easily without expertise or cultural authority responsible for organizing and classifying the world. The landscape of rock-cut cemeteries south of the Yangzi stands as a life-size staging of the mountain updated with a novel practice of placing and processing the dead.

As reiterated throughout the thesis, the formation process of cliffs tombs allows great freedom of design. Moreover, the very gesture of cutting such burial caves encourages one to view the spaces as a progression towards the inside of the mountain. While multi-chambered caves of the Min River course were the result of multiple endeavours by successive generations of a group or family, departing from a central corridor or antechamber established by a “tomb founder”, the cemeteries south of the Yangzi grew in a more organic and visible fashion, gradually covering the whole cliff face. With regards to the series of artificial mountains investigated in Chapter 8, the idea of “tunnelling” seems more appropriate to these spaces, than that of static cosmic models or direct paths to the afterlife. Indeed, the directional creatures and animals in cliff tombs south of the Yangzi are never found in the systematic arrangements of Han pictorial stones. Even the steady pair of *que* towers forming a heavenly gate is broken down into occasional lonely pillars pasted here and there around the cave openings. The multiple openings, enhanced by the carved recessions on doorframes, are as much entrances to the mountain or heaven as they are exits of tunnels leading to yet another layer of the funerary landscape, intertwined with the visible canyon-and-plateau topography. The caves themselves remain shallow, but they resonate with the suspended paths, portage routes and back-alleys which governed the use of the landscape south of the Yangzi.

Han tombs as we know them attempted to create alternative worlds in hermetically sealed environments, and we have little information on the over ground structures

⁵⁸ Jacobson 1985.

which evoked these worlds in the perceptible everyday environment of the living. Conversely, the essential function of cliff cemeteries south of the Yangzi seems to be bringing that alternative worlds into a landscape accessible to the living. Rather than a stark separation between the funerary sphere and the activities of the living, it is a shared landscape that seems to be negotiated here.

9.4 Summary: The builders of Type 2 caves

Stepping back from this consideration of how funerary landscapes reflected the human use of the landscape south of the Yangzi and returning to the core ideas of the dissertation, this chapter has sought to provoke debate about the identity of the builders of Type 2 caves and creates a platform for some concluding thoughts that follow in the next chapter.

The emerging profile is one of groups who dwelled in the piedmont areas, between plains and highlands. The groups were powerful enough at that specific moment to invest their resources into tomb-building, and they felt the need to display their presence in the landscape through a visual language that would evoke Han culture, while perceptibly missing core elements of Han funerary ideology. Because of the presence of inscriptions in Chinese language, the use of iron tools for the needs of rock-cutting, and select similarities in design and iconography with carvings found in the Sichuan basin, a strong influence from Han civilizational centres is undeniable. However, the content and the quality of the calligraphy and the nature of the iconographic borrowings suggest a limited knowledge of Chinese culture.

A question that this study repeatedly has had to face was that of the cultural identity of the cave builders. For many commentators, it seemed impossible that the makers and consumers of these conspicuous burials, in the midst of Han collapse, and in strictly selective locations, did not belong to one identifiable group in historical sources. As we have seen in Chapter 2, the frontier in Han times was home to pioneers, runaways, and local groups which ranged from indigenous tribes to tribes displaced from nearby areas, sinicized populations, indigenised incomers, etc. To select one group that had been named in historical sources at one point in history for one location in space and to match the profile built up by this research, would be a risky

reduction. Waves of deportation and immigration during Qin and Han times, gave way to both the constitution of “Han” unity as a newly composed group, and the constitution of intermediary, elusive groups such as the Qiang and the Bo, or the later Lao. Denominations found in written sources are essentially exonyms attributed by the Han to their neighbours, which underwent phonetic variations and multiple editing processes. More essentially, matching such exonyms with the archaeological evidence would disregard what the data is telling us here: rather than an ethno genesis, it is the genesis of identities at work and their opportunistic unfolding in space that the caves allude to. The agents defined by their historical role rather than by essentialised traits.

The intertwining of migration and identity has been mainly studied in the context of diasporic identities, which as compared to ethnic Identities, are defined by their distribution rather than by intrinsic qualities. For example the Peranakans,⁵⁹ a Malay diasporic group, retained their Chinese surnames and cultural practices such as ancestor worship. They have lost command of the Chinese language but remain proudly conscious of their Chinese heritage. Although traditional rituals have been influenced somewhat by local culture, their world view and ethos remain practically unchanged. Chinese customs and religious ideology are steadily maintained, almost as a substitute for the loss of Chinese language, and act to strengthen Chinese identity. They refer to themselves by an autonym, which “refers more to a group defined by cultural rather than racial characteristics; it refers to a sub-ethnic group which should be classified by ethnicity based on language, daily customs, and a consciousness of ethnic identity”.⁶⁰ Such groups maintain a double identity: acculturation does not necessarily imply a total assimilation into the host culture. Individual identities become more prominent too: in multi-ethnic societies a “situational ethnicity” is brought forth at the level of the individual.⁶¹

The groups in question distinctively reformulated Han funerary ideology. Pioneers would have no reason to alter Han customs to that extent, and the late date of most burials dismisses the idea of “first wave migrants”. Runaways or refugees from Han civilizational centres, would have sensibly chosen a more discreet way to process their

⁵⁹ Tong 2010.

⁶⁰ Tan 1988:247.

⁶¹ Paden 1967.

dead, and indigenous groups which had to do with Han settlers did not necessarily wish to invest that much energy in producing Han-like tombs. The wide distribution of Type 2 cave burials, the way they revisit Han tombs and avoid locations where Han tombs are found, as well as the relatively late date of their making with regards to cave burials elsewhere in the Southwest, point to a secondary development, by groups which would be a by-product of imperial conquest. This chapter suggested that post-contact groups are better defined by their strategic distribution in space and their role in trade and communication, in other words, their identity is both “situational” and “locational”.

10 Conclusion

10.1 Approaches to Han in the field of Chinese historical archaeology: Temporality, ethnicity and funerary ideology

The three core issues of temporality, ethnicity and funerary ideology reviewed in Chapter 2 were critically addressed in the course of my research by revisiting existing theoretical and methodological frameworks. It is from the specific angle of frontier history, through locational strategies and the comparative study of technological and iconographical traditions that a portrait of our cave builders was defined. This study thereby stands out as an opportunity to preserve the importance of context and agency in Chinese historical archaeology.

The field of historical archaeology in China today aims at a revival “with Chinese characteristics”, re-establishing (if it ever faded away) the primacy of literary sources with a focus on biography, linear chronologies, and the identification of specific groups as described in textual sources. At the level of data collection, the research presented here has made an effort to recognise these biases and has sought to bring the kinds of questions raised by post-processual archaeology into the current practice of archaeology in China. Hoping to build an interpretative bridge between proto-historical populations located at the margins of history and literacy and their more historically-documented neighbours, this study has focused on questions of memory rather than on transmitted texts. By paying attention to patterns of change and resurgence brought about by the collapse of empires, processes are privileged over linear chronologies. By looking at the production of identities such as occurs in frontier areas, culture contact is foregrounded rather than a culture-specific form of historical archaeology. By focusing on production processes rather than products, including the production of cultural landscapes, the agency of monuments prevails over the formal analysis of spaces, depictions and inscriptions.

10.2 A study on three scales

This research departed from the contrast between lowland and highland, borrowing Scott’s fervent description of mainland Southeast Asia to look at the Chinese marches

of the Yunnan-Guizhou plateau, an ecological buffer zone. Three different scales were thus adopted in the five core chapters of this thesis. In chapters 4 and 5, a “proto-historical” geography aimed to weave a network of major and minor routes at the interregional and regional scales, based on the distribution pattern of Type 1 and Type 2 burials in artificial caves. In chapters 6, 7 and 8, this study got closer to the material, with the analysis focusing on the caves and carvings. In Chapter 6, the research followed one of the secondary routes, the Qi River, a single tributary of the Yangzi River, to build up a positive definition of Type 2 cemeteries and caves. Chapter 6 also pushed the question of typology, technology and style closer to the material, sandstone, and questioned the phenomenon as a “stone working tradition”. It assessed the time and effort needed to carve a cave and what the typological and stylistic differences imply in terms of technology, the level of complexity needed in a *chaîne opératoire*, and the degree of uniformity required for a production to be considered a tradition. Chapters 7 and 8 brought in a higher level of definition to this study, with an analysis of the carved depictions and inscriptions in both Type 1 and Type 2 burials in artificial caves. Here, the thesis stepped into an exercise of comparative art history. Skill and cultural belonging were approached through formal analysis and comparison, to define the degree to which the carved depictions actually rely on Han iconography, or the level of literacy reached by the epigraphers.

While the Type 1/Type 2 distinction made in this thesis was helpful to structure field survey and the analysis of the collected data, it should not cloud our understanding of continuities and causal relationships between rock-cut burials in the plain and highlands. My comparative exercise thus did not reduce the diversity of Type 1 burials or essentialize the opportunistic choices made by the builders of Type 2 burials, to avoid the pitfalls of a binary system.

All three scales of enquiry adopted in this study foreground the question of “frontiers”, which thicken gradually as our lens zooms in to the topic: from the borders of a worldly empire, to the boundaries between habitable stretches of land and their margins, to the representational limits between the domestic sphere and its funerary double, the space of the tomb. At the widest scale envisaged here, the study area was visualised as a network of frontier routes under a collapsing empire, and the

landscapes studied as boundaries between areas of settled agriculturalists and highland groups. Scaling down our focus of attention, we envisage the cemeteries as structured by local common religious practice, crystallising otherworldly geographies, and the caves as doorways to this parallel world. Finally, it is through the language of architecture and geometry and the occasional use of images and text, that the identity of the tomb occupants expresses itself. Through cultural references that remain familiar to the scholars of Han funerary art, yet maintaining a crucial distinctiveness to the former, the builders of caves south of the Yangzi freely interpreted core elements of Han funerary ideology while adding previously unknown elements to it.

10.3 A tentative narrative

The caves south of the Yangzi embody the margins of what for many at the time would have been perceived as the civilized world, with extreme physicality, densely distributed as they are in each and every valley that mattered to marginal groups in terms of their dual potential for subsistence and transportation. At the same time, they occupy the areas of these narrow valleys where the land is unsuitable for the living. Generally, the assemblages of caves are relegated to floodable riverbanks, often below the level of terraced settlements. They occupy inhabitable parts of an already scarce amount of land, forming the negative of our hypothetical Eastern Han settlements, of which very little is known to this day. In the taskscape of our narrow valleys,¹ the caves occupy a marginal position, their production being relegated to moments of a slower pace in subsistence or trade activities. The caves appear as functional storage spaces for the dead, cut in areas that the living do not need, during the times of the year when other activities are put to rest. The rock-cut cemetery is an obvious, permanent, human addition to the natural landscape of canyons and plateaux south of the Yangzi River. Choices about siting, cutting and carving are made to render the tomb doors visible from afar, and to give the cemeteries a prominent position in the visible world of the living.

A series of artefacts summarily coined “artificial mountains”, were unearthed from cliff tombs in Sichuan, which have attracted little scholarly attention. These were proposed

¹ Ingold 1993.

as the epitome of a self-conscious evocation of otherworldly landscapes through the siting, cutting and carving of cliff tombs. Just like the otherworldly Queen Mother of the West faces the worldly Emperor and inverts his role in all terms, including gender, ruled territory, governed people and court, etc., our rock-cut cemeteries face the villages of the living and provide a symbolic counterpart to contested landscapes. Their location in the landscape can be read as both rational land management and the creation of powerful tunnels to otherworldly abodes.

This novel function of funerary landscapes creates distinctions that separate these examples from tombs in the core Han area and brings about questions about the identity of the cave builders. This thesis did not manage to find a name for the “people” behind these caves. Nameless, and without an explicit role in written history, what is to be done with these groups? The choice made by this study was to depart from the ground, from the territory. The tentative denomination of “back alley communities” was attributed to the groups in question as a form of situational identity. What initially appeared as a scattered constellation of niches, gradually appeared as demarcating themselves from major communication axes and civilisational centres, thereby taking a considered and systematic distance away from the front stage of History.² The very remoteness of burials south of the Yangzi, their distinctive site structure, cave shape and imagery could suddenly be read as a strategy. The consistencies and discrepancies found in technology, design and the use of writing, between the graves of the historical empire and those on the frontier, appeared as purposeful forms of hybridisation. The collapse of an empire represented a unique historical opportunity for cultural intermediaries and neighbouring groups to the Han, who subsisted and traded in alternative ways. The “Kingdom of Dian” and its symbolic power had been absorbed by the Han, but other entities comparable to the elusive “Yelang Confederation”, with more flexible structures, might have instead mingled with waves of Han migration and, just like wild grass, thrived again when the Han withered. This loose union of tribes, merchants and post-contact groups formed a chain of paths from one canyon-valley to another, and gradually built up or strengthened a huge network of routes that connected the southern areas of Han to the Southeast Asian mainland and coastal areas. It is argued here that it is precisely in

² Scott 2009.

the areas south of the Yangzi, spared by the linear progression of history and civilization, that an anthropology of “Han” is permitted. In this arena, “Han” is the Other, which can be the object of a past discourse. Such a discourse is, for once, not only reflexive and based on its own over-coded and continuously edited historical sources. It is such a discourse, de-centred, non-verbal, and rooted in local landscapes that this thesis wishes to serve and disclose. It is from an outsider position that one learns how peripheries foreground a centre. As in many ways, the identities investigated here are first and foremost topographic, the accent was put on materiality and a physical survey of the sites.

This study concluded with a discussion about the identification of a historical group, and presented the burial caves south of the Yangzi as the outcome of a historical process started with the Han, standing at the end of the period of use of such burials. Burial caves south of the Yangzi, however, do not appear solely as a geographically marginal, frontier sub-type elite example. Rather, their temporal and geographical outsider position allowed us to develop a wider comparative exercise. From the imperial centre, to a province, and then to a frontier, through five centuries of Han empire-building, rock-cut burials endorse the following roles :

- As a cultural and technological innovation, starting in Western Han with the royal tombs of the Liu family in Xuzhou (limestone)³
- As a popular regional/provincial trend for both wealthy families and commoners, starting in Eastern Han in the Sichuan basin (sandstone) and reaching the Three Gorges area
- As a “niche” activity by post-contact populations, fuelling the rise of local identities starting at the end of the Eastern Han period along secondary trade routes.

In fact, all three versions of rock-cut burials were produced with a consciousness of their ideological location on an imperial or immediately post-imperial map, and as part of inter-group relations: the Liu family nurturing imperial ambitions, the big landowners of Sichuan affirming a “cult” to private and familial structures, and the “back alley communities” south of the Yangzi, marking a contested landscape with

³ Miller 2011.

their new-built identities. Indeed, the lack of direct connection between elite rock-cut burials from the Central Plains and Sichuanese wealthy familial rock-cut shrines was noticed by previous studies. Moreover, this study has demonstrated that distinctions between Type 1 and Type 2 tombs can be considerable, regardless whether the latter is to be considered an alternative or the latest offspring of a funerary practice. However, despite irreducible differences, there are obvious bridges between rock-cutting practices in all these three places. Future research directions that spring out of the survey and the theoretical and methodological investigation would be to extend the reach of our historical and geographical enquiry, in order to verify the conclusions of this work from a wider comparative perspective.

10.4 Future developments: A trans-historical study of cliff burials

When looking at an alternative to the “Han tomb” as all-pervasive model, I started looking at cliff burial practices in South China in general. While at first hesitating to include forms of burial practiced in the area at much earlier or much later times, fieldwork showed that other instances of cliff burial practices provide an alternative framework to discuss funerary practices than the one usually applied to Han tombs. Indeed, while recent studies made connections between Sichuanese and Indian, Central Asian or Etruscan cliff tombs,⁴ none included a trans-historical discussion on the several occurrences of the use of cliff burials in artificial caves in the very region in which they bloomed in late Han times. This type of funerary behaviour, i.e. using the canyon-like valleys as “theatres” with dense clusters of individual man-made caves placed high above ground, with no attention devoted to the closure or concealing of the coffin/corpse, happens to have been used in the area at other times in history. If the study exits the grand scheme of Imperial history, then this specific funerary behaviour is more than a peripheral version of a regional version of a Han tomb, and the wider context of cliff burial has to be addressed.

Survey between the years 2009-2016, operating on a wider temporal and spatial scale than that presented in this thesis, has led me to the conviction that time in the highlands does not beat to the same rhythm as the historical timeline of civilizational centres in the plains, and cyclical logics are likely to act upon the frontier. The

⁴ Wu Hung 1995:133, Rawson 1999:24, Xuan Chen 2015:26.

systematic distance discovered during fieldwork between Eastern Han “plain” model cemeteries and “highland” model cemeteries was found to be repeated in other periods and responding to different geopolitical configurations. Several cliff burial sites attributed to pre-Imperial times or to later periods of increased Imperial activity on the frontier were surveyed by this study in parallel to the Eastern Han rock-cut cemeteries south of the Yangzi. While much effort was devoted during survey to differentiating Type 2 caves south of the Yangzi, from several centuries’ later rock-cut burials which chose similar landscape settings and mimicked a few of the characteristics of the Eastern Han caves, I was also able to spend time investigating the distribution of these later cliff cemeteries. It became clear that later cliff burials were located on tributaries which suggest another configuration of actors on the regional route network of this later time. Tang period cliff cemeteries along the Long River in Fengdu, for example, were all clustered along a major tributary of the Yangzi, rather than reaching out for a remote second-order stream as would have been the case in Eastern Han times. Song period cliff cemeteries in southern Sichuan and Chongqing would choose the upper course of the Jinsha or Wu Rivers, rather than focusing on their middle course as was the case in Eastern Han times. Both Tang and Song period cave burials would mimic signatures of our late Eastern Han tradition, such as the recessed door (**Fig. 10.1.**). Han period endeavours, embedded as they are in the landscape, have obviously had a continuous impact on the imagination of following settlers of the same regions. Although these observations exceed the chronological scope of this thesis and therefore are only introduced briefly here at the end, it is noteworthy to mention here how similar mechanisms of funerary production might be negotiated at different moments of frontier history when, perhaps, similar situations of cultural contact and exchange are at play. From a wider perspective, the previously identified “frontier type” of burial caves south of the Yangzi which were produced in times of Imperial collapse appears as a specific historical adaptation of a wider, trans-historical category of attitude to burial shared by several groups in Southwest China from at least late Warring States to Ming times (2,000 years).



10.1. Three-layered recessed doors and niches in Shanshuping. Fengdu district, Chongqing municipality. Estimated to date from the Song period (10th-13th century CE). Cave height circa 80 cm.

A potential extension to this study would address the wider perspective of cliff burials in South China and Southeast Asia. Such continued, longitudinal historical enquiry would require surveying more extensively the eastern side of the Three Gorges and the northern tributaries of the Yangzi, which connect it to the centres of Imperial power. The influence coming from the Hunan-Hubei plain (former Chu), through the Yangzi gorges and through major fluvial axes such as the Yuan River, is still poorly understood today. However, important routes are known to have connected the gorges to the north and to the east in the Three Kingdoms period. Archaeological data on tombs of the post-Han period for the area is now available and largely awaiting interpretation. Handling such a project would mean to continue investigating the general movement of diversification of regional cultures after the Han dynasty. One would hypothesize that ostentatious burials in canyon and plateau landscapes are the result of moments of increased culture contact, and tools for claiming local identities. As mentioned above, preliminary survey showed that different historical configurations highlighted different rivers and routes as more or less strategical. To Von Glahn, the leap between suspended coffins and man-made cliff caves is the sign of

a transition from forest-dwelling to an agrarian society (or “sedentarisation”), to which he relates depictions associated with the cliff burials showing both domestic and wild animals as well as scenes of hunting, fishing and stock-raising, in particular horse-breeding.⁵ Further potential material for cross-cultural comparison is provided by Mainland Southeast Asian examples of 14th century cliff burials in highland areas neighbouring strong lowland riverine states such as Angkor, and ethnoarchaeological comparison could be provided by contemporary cliff burials in Island Southeast Asia such as the Toraja on South Sulawesi. A potential development of this study would thus be to look at comparable phenomena in the same area, or comparable landscapes in South China and Southeast Asia from a transhistorical perspective.

⁵ Von Glahn 1987:22.

11. Appendixes

11.1. Appendix to Chapters 2, 4 and 5: Timeline

No	date	summary of event or translation	section, other references and comments	chinese text	source
1	Bronze age	Lichuan. It is presented as the potential place of origin of the Ba, whose king is said to have invented earthen boats. The Ba are said to navigate on the Qing River.	section Nanman xinanyi liezhuan 南蠻西南夷列傳 Also in Taiping yulan Juan 166 Section Shu ji 蜀記 廬州所引	巴郡南郡蠻，本有五姓：巴氏，樊氏，暉氏，相氏，鄭氏。皆出於武落鍾離山。其山有赤黑二穴，巴氏之子生於赤穴，四姓之子皆生黑穴。未有君長，俱事鬼神，乃共擲劍於石穴，約能中者，奉以為君。巴氏子務相乃獨中之，眾皆嘆。又令各乘土船，約能浮者，當以為君。餘姓悉沈，唯務相獨浮。因共立之，是為廩君。乃乘土船，從夷水至鹽陽。鹽水有神女，謂廩君曰：“此地廣大，魚鹽所出，願留共居。”廩君不許。鹽神暮輒來取宿，旦即化為虫，與諸虫群飛，掩蔽日光，天地晦冥。積十餘日，廩君思其便，因射殺之，天乃開明。廩君於是君乎夷城，四姓皆臣之。廩君死，魂魄世為白虎。巴氏以虎飲人血，遂以人祠焉。	Hou Hanshu 1971 Zhonghua shuju Juan 86 Page 2840.
2	Warring states	A thousand li of zhandao lead to Shu	Also in Qin ce 秦策 Section Cai Ze jian zhu yu Zhao 蔡澤見逐於趙 and Zhanguoce Juan 5	今君相秦，計不下席，某不出廊廟，坐制諸侯，利施三川，以實宜陽，決羊腸之險，塞太行之口，又斬范、中行之途，棧道千裡於蜀漢使天下皆烏托邦秦。秦之欲得矣，君之功極矣。此亦秦之分功之時也！	Shiji 1972 Zhonghua shuju Juan 79 Page 2423.

No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
4	Qin	For their military enterprises, Qin used catamarans, which are stable and can transport heavy loads : « West of the Qin are Ba and Shu, thier assembled boats carry grain, they (...) follow the river downstream, three thousand li away from us (Chu, present day Hubei). Wide boat carry soldiers, fifty soldiers can stand on one of such boats, with 3 months of supplies, floating downstream the river they cover more than 300 li in one day...»	Also in Zhanguoce Juan 16 Stratagems of Chu Section Zhang Yi wei Qin po cong lianheng 張儀為秦破從 連橫 方船 + 舫船 = 雙體船	秦西有巴蜀，方船積粟，起於汶山，循江而下，至郢三千餘裡。舫船載卒，一舫載五十人，與三月之糧，下水而浮，一日行三百餘裡；裡數雖多，不費馬汗之勞，不至十日而距捍關；捍關驚，則從竟陵已東，盡城守矣，黔中、巫郡非王之有已。秦舉甲出之武關，南面而攻，則北地絕。秦兵之攻楚也，危難在三月之內。而楚恃諸侯之救，在半歲之外，此其勢不相及也。	Shiji 1972 Zhonghua shuju Juan 70 Page 2290.
5	Qin	Zhandao are omnipresent and all-reaching : « Bashu was irrigated, fertile land, the land abundant, with ginger, cinnabar, minerals, copper, iron, bamboo, and wooden artifacts. It had the Dian and Bo slaves on its south. On its the Qiongzhuo who raised horses and yacks. On the four marches, the pervasive zhandao covered a thousand li. Their mouth was held by the Baoxie route, easing access to these resources (...) »	Section Huoshi liezhuan	巴蜀亦沃野，地饒施、姜、丹沙、石、銅、鐵、竹、木之器。南御滇樊，樊僅。西近邛笮，笮馬、旄牛。然四塞，棧道千裡，無所不通，唯褒斜縮轂其口，以所多易所鮮。天水、隴西、北地、上郡與關中同俗，然西有羌中之利，北有戎翟之畜，畜牧為天下饒。	Shiji 1972 Zhonghua shuju Juan 129 Page 3261.
6	c.316 BCE	Under the first year of the reign of Zhou Nan, Ba commandery is founded and Shu taken. Tens of thousands of households move to Shu.	section Shu Zhi	周赧王元年，秦惠王封子通國為蜀侯，以陣壯為相。置巴郡。以張若為蜀國守。戎伯尚強，乃移秦民萬家實之。	Huayang Guozhi 1984 Bashu shushe Juan 3 Page 194.

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7	298-280 BCE	<p>The name "Zangke" is thought to derive from a piece of wood used to anchor a boat, a method adopted by general Zhuang Qiao when he followed the Yuan River upstream on his way to Yelang. Halfway to his destination, he renamed the place originally called Julian 且兰.</p> <p>According to Liu Lin him a big part of modern Guizhou was called Zangke, not only the location Julian, as the name Zangke was also attached to the Mekong River in the early Han period.</p> <p>This is the first version of Zhuang Qiao's itinerary to Dian: it places the expedition under the reign of king Qing Xiang 顷襄, and designates the Yuan river as main route, through Julian 且兰 and Yelang 夜郎 towards Dian to found Zangke commandery.</p>	<p>(1) section Nanzhong zhi - Pingyi jun See also Liu Lin commentary in HYGZ 1984:339. (2) Nanman xinanyi liezhuan, under the section Yelang.</p>	<p>(1) 周之李世，楚威王遣將軍庄躋溯沅水，出且藍，以找夜郎，植牂柯系船。於是且蘭既克，夜郎又降，而秦奪楚黔中地，無路得反，遂留王滇池。躋，楚庄王苗裔也。以牂柯系船，因名且蘭為牂柯國。 (2) 初，楚頃襄王時，遣將軍莊躋從沅水伐夜郎，軍至且蘭，林船於岸而步戰。既滅夜郎，因留王滇池以且蘭有標船群柯處，乃改其名為牂柯。</p>	<p>(1) Huayang Guozhi 1984 Bashu shushe Juan 4 Page 335. (2) Hou Hanshu 1971 Zhonghua shuju Juan 86 Page 284 5.</p>
8	281 BCE	<p>The Shiji places Zhuang Qiao's expedition under the reign of King Wei of Chu. His itinerary follows the Yangzi, going West of Ba and Qianzhong.</p> <p>Blocked on his way back to Chu by a Qin counterstroke (281 BCE), Zhuang Qiao becomes king of Dian, changes his dress and adopts local customs.</p>	<p>section Xinanyi liezhuan</p>	<p>始楚威王時，使將軍庄躋將兵循江上，略巴、黔中以西。庄躋者，故楚庄王苗裔也。躋至滇池，地方三百裡，旁平地，肥饒數千裡，以兵威定屬楚。欲歸報，會秦擊奪楚巴、黔中郡，道塞不通，因還，以其眾王滇，變服，從其俗，以長之。秦時常頡頏通五尺道，諸此國頗置吏焉。十餘歲，秦滅。及漢興，皆棄此國而開蜀故徼。巴蜀民或竊出商賈，取其笮馬、犍僮、髦牛，以此巴蜀殷富。</p>	<p>Shiji 1972 Zhonghua shuju Juan 116 Page 2993.</p>
9	Qin-Han	<p>Qin and Han rulers built roads to connect the Sichuan basin to the area south of the Yangzi, and sent official to control the roads.</p>	<p>section Shihuozhi</p>	<p>唐蒙、司馬相如始開西南夷，鑿山通道千餘裡，以廣巴蜀，巴蜀之民罷焉。彭吳穿緄貊、朝鮮，置滄海郡，則燕齊之間靡然發動。及王恢謀馬邑，匈奴絕和親，侵擾北邊，兵連不解，天下共其勞。干戈日滋，行者賫，居者送，中外騷擾相奉，百姓抗敝以巧法，財賂衰耗而不澹。人物者補官，出貨者除罪，選舉陵夷，廉恥相冒，武力進用，法嚴令具，興利之臣自此而始。</p>	<p>Hanshu 1962 Zhonghua shuju Juan 24 Page 1157.</p>

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10	Qin-Han	The 'Bo route' (Bodao 燹道) was named under Emperor Wu of Han, when Tang Meng built a route to reach Nanzhong. It was one of the 12 counties under Qianwei commandery.	Section Dili zhi	健為郡，戶十萬九千四百一十九，口四十八萬九千四百八十六。縣十二：燹道，江陽，武陽，南安，資中，符，牛鞞，南廣，漢陽，郫郫，朱提，堂琅。	Hanshu 1962 Zhonghua shuju Juan 28 Page 1599.
11	Western Han	(Bodao 燹道) In the territorial organisation under Qin, territorial units (國, 邑, 縣, 亭, 鄉), according to their importance and their population, correspond to official functions (皇太后, 皇后, 公主, 列侯, 令, 長, 三老) and salaries. A 'dao 道' is where barbarians live (有蠻夷曰道).	section Dili zhi	縣令、長，皆秦官，掌治其縣。萬戶以上為令，秩千石至六百石。減萬戶為長，秩五百石至三百石。皆有丞、尉，秩四百石至二百石，是為長史。百石以下有斗食、佐史之秩，是為少史。大率十裡一亭，亭有長。十亭一鄉，鄉有三老、有秩、嗇夫、游徼。三老掌教化。嗇夫職聽訟，收賦稅。游徼徼循禁賊盜。縣大率方百裡，其民稠則減，稀則曠，鄉、亭亦如之，皆秦制也。列侯所食縣曰國，皇太后、皇后、公主所食曰邑，有蠻夷曰道。	Hanshu 1962 Zhonghua shuju Juan 19 Page 742.
12	Western Han	The Han, just like the Qin before them, occupy the land of the southern barbarian and summon taxes on the production to support their army.	section Ping jun shu	其後漢將歲以數萬騎出擊胡，及車騎將軍衛青取匈奴河南地，筑朔方。當是時，漢通西南夷道，作者數萬人，千里負擔饋糧，率十餘鐘致一石，散幣於邛樊以集之。數歲道不通，蠻夷因以數攻，吏發兵誅之。悉巴蜀租賦不足以更之，乃募豪民田南夷，入粟縣官，而內受錢於都內。東至滄海之郡，人徒之費擬於南夷。又興十萬餘人筑衛朔方，轉漕甚遠，自山東咸被其勞，費數十百巨萬，府庫益虛。乃募民能入奴婢得以終身復，為郎增秩，及入羊為郎，始於此。	Shiji 1972 Zhonghua shuju Juan 30 Page 1421.
13	Western Han	Tens of thousands of households were sent to locations such as Fangling, passes and remote locations that functioned as a form of confinement.	section Hanzhong zhi	新城郡，本漢中房陵縣也。秦始皇徙呂不韋舍人萬家於房陵，以其隘地也。漢時宗族、大臣有罪，亦多徙此縣。漢末，以為房陵郡。	Hua Yang Guo Zhi 1984 Bashu shushe juan 2 page 138.

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14	Western Han	In Ba and Shu, after massive Qin period migration, the roads are considered as dangerous.	Section Xiangyu benji 项羽本纪	義帝雖無功，故當分其地而王之。諸將皆曰：善。乃分天下，立諸將為侯王。項王、范增疑沛公之有天下，業已講解，又惡負約，恐諸侯叛之，乃陰謀曰：‘巴、蜀道險，秦之遷人皆居蜀’。乃曰：巴、蜀亦關中地也。	Shiji 1972 Zhonghua shuju Juan 7 Page 316.
15	202-186 BCE	“The Censor-in-chief says: ‘As to those who go beyond the frontier and through the passes illegally, a final decision has not been [rendered]. [The Censor-in-chief] requests that whoever enters and exits the fords and passes at the frontiers illegally be tattooed and made to build walls [for men] and pound grain [for women]; that whoever passes the frontiers illegally [be sentenced to] amputation of the left foot and made to build walls; and that those officers and men in charge, if they do not catch them, [be sentenced to] redeemable shaving off of the beard’.”	translated by Osamu 2001:122-3.		Jinguan ling 津關令 (Ordinances on Fords and Passes). Excavated from Han Tomb Number 247, Zhan gjiashan.
16	185 BCE 180 BCE	In the third year of Empress Gao (185 BC), a deluge took place in Hanzhong and Nanjun, destroying four thousand households (...). In the eighth year of Empress Gao (180 BC), deluge hit Hanzhong and Nanjun again, hitting six thousand households.	Section Wuxing zhi Zhu Cheng et al. 2008 indicate that this period corresponds to the third deluge of Holocene in the Three Gorges area and the Jiangnan Plain.	高后三年夏，漢中、南郡大水，水出流四千餘家。四年秋，河南大水，伊、雒流千六百餘家，汝水流八百餘家。八年夏，漢中、南郡水復出，流六千餘家。南陽沔水流萬餘家。是時女主獨治，諸呂相王。	Hanshu 1962 Zhonghua shuju Juan 27 Page 1346.

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17	Western Han	<p>"The people suffer from seven disasters. Floods and droughts are the first disaster. Corrupted officials are the second disaster. Poverty is the third disaster. The <i>daxing</i> (...) are the fourth disaster. etc..."</p>	<p>section Liezhuan</p>	<p>民凡有七亡。水旱為災。一亡也。縣官重賦。二亡也。貪吏取受。三亡也。豪強大姓。蠶食無厭。四亡也。苛吏徭役。農桑失時。五亡也。部落鳴鼓。男女遮列。六亡也。賊盜劫掠。七亡也。七亡尚可。</p>	<p>Hanshu 1962 Zhonghua shuju Juan 72 Page 3088.</p>
18	<p>Western Han 151 BCE 135 BCE</p>	<p>Present-day Luzhou city (<i>Jiangyang</i> 江陽; 151 BCE), previously part of Ba commandery 巴郡, was made into the administrative center of Qianwei commandery, Yizhou province, in 135 BCE.</p> <p>(1) Jiangyang had abundant resources in salt.</p> <p>(2) Also attributed an official to supervise iron production.</p>	<p>Later sources such as the Yuanhe junxian tuzhi present Jiangyang as the wealthiest salt mine in Southern Sichuan, with its 7 wells and its monthly production of 3660 shi 石.</p>	<p>(1) 江陽縣 (...) 有富義鹽井。</p>	<p>(1) Huayang Guozhi 1984 Bashu shushe Juan 3 Page 290. (2) Hanshu 1962 Zhonghua shuju Juan 28 Page 1599.</p>

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19	Western Han 135 BCE	General Tang Meng's 唐蒙 questions the Shu merchants about the sources of betel. The Zangke River appears as the best route to take over Yelang in 夜郎 135-130 BCE, in-between Shu and Nanyue. The term Fu pass is reported first in the Shiji, where it is used by general Tang Meng with more than 10,000 men on his way from Bashu to Yelang. (Controversy on the 符 character, written 笮 in the Hanshu.)	Section Xinanyi liezhuan See translation in Hervouet 1964 :81.	(1) 建元六年，大行王恢擊東越，東越殺王郢以報。恢因兵威使番陽令唐蒙風指曉南越。南越食蒙蜀枸醬，蒙問所從來，曰“道西北牂柯，牂柯江廣數裡，出番禺城下”。蒙歸至長安，問蜀賈人，賈人曰：“獨蜀出枸醬，多持竊出市夜郎。夜郎者，臨牂柯江，江廣百餘步，足以行船。南越以財物役屬夜郎，西至同師，然亦不能臣使也。”蒙乃上書說上曰：“南越王黃屋左纛，地東西萬餘裡，名為外臣，實一州主也。今以長沙、豫章往，水道多絕，難行。竊聞夜郎所有精兵，可得十餘萬，浮船牂柯江，出其不意，此制越一奇也。誠以漢之強，巴蜀之饒，通夜郎道，為置吏，易甚。”上許之。 (2) 乃拜蒙為郎中將，將千人，食重萬餘人，從巴蜀符關入，遂見夜郎侯多同。蒙厚賜，喻以威德，約為置吏，使其子為令。夜郎旁小邑皆貪漢繒帛，以為漢道險，終不能有也，乃且聽蒙約。還報，乃以為犍為郡。發巴蜀卒治道，自犍道指牂柯江。蜀人司馬相如亦言西夷邛、笮可置郡。使相如以郎中將往，喻，皆如南夷，為置一都尉，十餘縣，屬蜀。	(1) Shiji 1972 Zhonghua shuju Juan 116 Page 2994. (2) Shiji 1972 Zhonghua shuju Juan 116 Page 2994.
20	Han	Early sources mention the trade of Bo slaves (<i>bo tong</i> 樊童; literally Bo children), along with horse trade from the Zuo (<i>zuo ma</i> 笮馬) in the West. Liu Lin relates the Bo slave trade to later Liao slave trade 僚人 (Huayang Guozhi 1984, Juan 3, page 180)	Section Huoyu liezhuan and Xinanyi liezhuan	巴蜀亦沃野，地饒施、薑、丹沙、石、銅、鐵、竹、木之器。南御滇樊，樊僮。西近邛笮，笮馬、旄牛。然四塞，棧道千里，無所不通，唯褒斜綰轂其口，以所多易所鮮。	Shiji 1972 Zhonghua shuju Juan 129 Page 3261.

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21	Han	In Han times, Zhuti commandery was known to produce silver.	Section Shihuo zhi	黃金重一斤，直錢萬。朱提銀重八兩為一流，直一千五百八十。它銀一流直千。是為銀貨二品。 朱提，山出銀。	Hanshu 1962 Zhonghua shuju Juan 24 Page 1178 and 1599.
22	Han	Qianwei commandery counted 194,119 households and had 12 counties: Bodao, Jiangyang, Wuyang, Nan'an, Zizhong, Fu, Niupi, Nanchang, Hanyang, Cunma, Zhuti, Changlang.	Section Shuzhi Qianwei Jun	犍為郡，孝武建元六年置(...)	Huayang Guozhi 1984 Bashu shushe Juan 3 Pages 270-288.
23	Han	The <i>daxing</i> 大姓 are also called <i>haoxia</i> 豪俠. They exploit the resources in salt and copper, possess land and rivers, wealthy households (...)	Section Shu zhi	家有鹽銅之利，戶專山川之材，居給人足，以富相尚。	Huayang Guozhi 1984 Bashu shushe juan 3 page 225.
24	122 BCE	(1) Zhang Qian said: "When I was in Da Xia, I noticed the bamboo staves of Qiong and the cloth of Shu; when I asked how these had been acquired, the men of Daxia said: "Our merchants go and buy them in the land of Shendu. That state lies some thousands of li south-east of Da Xia. Its way of life is one of attachment to the land, as it is in Da Xia, but the place is low, damp and very hot. The people ride on elephants to fight their battles, and the state borders on a large river.' According to my reckoning, Daxia lies 12,000 li away from Han in the south-west; we now find that Shendu	(1) Hanshu, juan 61, see translation by Hulsewé 1979:211-213.	(1) 竇曰：「臣在大夏時，見邛竹杖、蜀布，問安得此，大夏國人曰：『吾賈人往市之身毒國。身毒國在大夏東南可數千里。其俗土著，與大夏同，同卑溼暑熱。其民乘象以戰。其國臨大水焉。』以騫度之，大夏去漢萬二千里，居西南。今身毒又居大夏東南數千里，有蜀物，此其去蜀不遠矣。今使大夏，從羌中，險，羌人惡之；少北，則為匈奴所得；從蜀，宜徑，又無寇。」天子既聞大宛及大夏、安息之屬皆大國，多奇物，土著，頗與中國同俗，而兵弱，貴漢財物；其北則大月氏、康	(1) Hanshu, Juan 61 Pages 2689-2690. (2) Huayang Guozhi 1984 Bashu shushe

		<p>lies several thousand li to the south-east of Daxia and is in possession of goods from Shu. Were an envoy to be sent to Daxia to make his way through the Qiang, he would find it dangerous going, and the Qiang people would hate it; and were he to go a little further north, he would be captured by the Xiongnu; but if he were to go by way of Shu, he would be on a direct route, and moreover, there would be no brigands. (...)</p> <p>The Son of Heaven was delighted and believed Zhang Qian's report. He then gave orders that men should be sent out from Shu and Qianwei commanderies to reconnoitre, proceeding simultaneously by four routes. Leaving from the Mang, Zi, Si, Qiong and Bo, each one travelled one or two thousand li. In the north their way was blocked by the Di and the Zi, and in the south by the Sui and the Kunming (tribes). People such as the Kunming have no rulers or chiefs and are accomplished brigands; they always killed or pillaged the Han envoys and in the end none were able to get through. However, it was learnt that some thousand or more li to the west there was the state of the elephant riders, named Dian Yu, and that merchants of Shu who were privately taking their goods out had sometimes reached there. Thereupon Han for the first time made contact with the state of Dian, in the search of a route to Da Yuan. Previously when Han had wished to open communications with the barbarians of the south-west, the expenses had been great and (the attempt) had been abandoned. When Zhang Qian reported that it would be possible to communicate thereby with Da Xia, a further venture was undertaken with the barbarian people of the south-west.</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>A reference is made to Zhang Qian finding Shu items in Da Xia when Tang Meng looks for the betel trade route to Yue.</p>		<p>居之屬，兵彊，可以賂遺設利朝也。誠得而以義屬之，則廣地萬里，重九譯，致殊俗，威德徧於四海。天子欣以焉言為然。乃令因蜀犍為發間使，四道並出：出駱，出荊，出徙、邛，出樊，皆各行一二千里。其北方閉氏、苴，南方閉嵩、昆明。昆明之屬無君長，善寇盜，輒殺略漢使，終莫得通。然聞其西可千餘里，有乘象國，名滇越，而蜀賈間出物者或至焉，於是漢以求大夏道始通滇國。</p> <p>初，漢欲通西南夷，費多，罷之。及焉言可以通大夏，乃復事西南夷。</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>武帝使張焉至大夏國，見邛竹、蜀布，問所從來，曰：‘吾賈人從身毒的之。’身毒國，蜀之西國，今永昌是也。焉以白帝。東攻南越，大行王恢救之。恢使番陽令唐蒙曉諭南越。南越人食有苽蒟醬，蒙問所從，曰：‘牂柯來。’蒙亦以白帝，因上書曰：‘南越地東西萬里，名為外臣，實一州主。今以長沙、豫章往，水道多絕，難行。竊聞夜郎精兵可得十萬，若從（番禺）、（牂柯）浮船（牂柯）（番禺），出其不意，此制越之一奇也。可通夜郎道，為置吏主之。’</p>	<p>Juan 4 Page 341.</p>
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No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
25		An passage of the <i>Yantie lun</i> mentions the existence of the <i>citang</i> : "Those of middling wealth (build) citang, screened entrances (to tombs), side doors, and enclosing walls with regularly spaced pillar-gates"	Section San bu zu	古者，不封不樹，反虞祭於寢，無壇宇之居，廟堂之位。及其后，則封之，庶人之墳半仞，其高可隱。今富者積土成山，列樹成林，台榭連閣，集觀增樓。中者祠堂屏閣，垣闕眾惡。	Yantie lun 1992 Zhonghua shuju Juan 6 page 353-355.
26	108 BCE	Among the hundreds of south-western tribes, only Yelang and Dian received a royal seal.	Also in Hanshu 1962 Zhonghua shuju Juan 95 Page 3842.	滇王者，其眾數萬人，其旁東北有勞漫、靡莫，皆同姓相扶，未肯聽。勞漫、靡莫數侵犯使者吏卒。元封二年，天子發巴蜀兵擊滅勞漫、靡莫，以兵臨滇。滇王始首善，以故弗誅。滇王難西南夷，舉國降，請置吏入朝。於是以為益州郡，賜滇王王印，復長其民。西南夷君長以百數，獨夜郎、滇受王印。滇小邑，最寵焉。	Shiji 1972 Zhonghua shuju Juan 116 Page 2997.
27	2 CE	Census numbers for the 2nd year of the Yuanshi era (西漢元始二年; 2 CE). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shu commandery 1596 • Qianwei commandery 1599 • Yuecui commandery 1600 • Yizhou commandery 1601 • Zangke commandery 1602 • Ba commandery 1603 	Section dili zhi	元始二年戶十九萬五千七百二，口六十八萬二千四百六十八。(…)	Hanshu 1962 Zhonghua shuju Juan 28 Pages 1543 to 1604.

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28	9 CE to 274 CE	<p>Fu county 符县</p> <p>Fu was made into a county in 115 BCE under Jiangyang commandery, then known as Fujie 符节 in Eastern Han.</p> <p>Under the Wang Mang interregnum (9-24 CE/2nd year of the Yuanding era), Fu County was rebaptised Fuxin County 符信县, and it kept this name under the Eastern Han (25 to 213 CE), until it went back to its previous appellation, Fu, under the Western Jin (266-274 CE).</p>	<p>See also Shuijing zhu 1957 Kexue chubanshe Juan 33 or Shuijing zhu 1984 Shanghai renmin chubanshe Juan 33 Pages 1035-1064.</p>	<p>又東過符縣北邪東南，緡郛水從符關東北注之。</p> <p>符縣，故巴夷之地也。漢武帝建元六年(135 BCE)，以唐蒙為中郎將，從萬人出巴符關者也。元鼎二年立 (115 BCE)，王莽之符信矣。縣治安樂水會，水源南通寧州平夷郡黿縣，北逕安樂縣界之東，又逕符縣下，北入江。</p>	<p>Shuijing zhu 1999 Jiangsu guji chubanshe Juan 33 Page 2786.</p>
29	48 CE	<p>In 48 CE, Liu Shang was sent to Wuling, with more than 10,000 soldiers on boats on the Yuan river.</p> <p>He was defeated within a year but the next spring, Ma Yuan undertook an expedition.</p> <p>Ma Yuan died in the course of this campaign but the success of Chinese arms had already been arranged under his leadership.</p>	<p>section Nanman xinyi liezhuan 南蛮西南夷列传</p> <p>On the tribes of Wuling during Later Han</p> <p>See Bielenstein, RHD III, 67-73.</p> <p>And De Crespigny 2004 : 8-9.I</p>	<p>光武中興，武陵蠻夷特盛。建武二十三年，精夫相單程等據其險隘，大寇郡縣。遣武威將軍劉尚發南郡、長沙、武陵兵萬余人，乘船沅水入武谿擊之。尚輕敵入險，山深水疾，舟船不得上。蠻氏知尚糧少入遠，又不曉道徑，遂屯聚守險。尚食盡引遠，蠻緣路傲戰，尚軍大敗，悉為所沒。二十四年，相單程等下攻臨沅，遣謁者李嵩、中山太守馬成擊之，不能剋。明年春，遣伏波將軍馬援、中郎將劉匡、馬武、孫永登，將兵至臨沅，擊破之。</p>	<p>Hou Hanshu 1971 Zhonghua shuju Juan 86 Page 2832.</p>

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30	Han	<p>There is no consensus on the location of Bi.</p> <p>There was a 'Bi River' 警水 in Zangke commandery (111 BCE), entering the Yuan River to the East.</p> <p>It was a tributary of the Wu River which received its waters from the Wen River 溫水 and the Qian River 黠水 from Qianwei commandery (135 BCE).</p> <p>Note : Liu Lin 1984:294 thinks the Wen River is today's Fuyang River 绥阳河, while the Qian River is today's Mei River 湄江 in Meitan 湄潭, both rivers marked the limits of Fu county.</p> <p>He Shiwei 2012 :132 thinks the Wen River is today's Niudu River 牛渡河, and the Qian River is today's Xiang River 湘江.</p>	Section Junguozhi	<p>(1) 牂柯郡，武帝元鼎六年開。莽曰同亭。有柱蒲關。屬益州。戶二萬四千二百一十九，口十五萬三千三百六十。縣十七：故且蘭，沅水東南至益陽入江，過郡二，行二千五百三十里。鐔封，溫水東至廣鬱入鬱，過郡二，行五百六十里。警，不狼山，警水所出，東入沅，過郡二，行七百三十里。(…)</p> <p>(2) 犍為郡，武帝建元六年開。莽曰西順。屬益州。戶十萬九千四百一十九，口四十八萬九千四百八十六。縣十二：犍道，莽曰樊治。江陽，武陽，有鐵官。莽曰戡成。南安，有鹽官、鐵官。資中，符，溫水南至警入黠水，黠水亦南至警入江。莽曰符信。</p> <p>(3) 犍為郡，武帝建元六年開。莽曰西順。屬益州。戶十萬九千四百一十九，口四十八萬九千四百八十六。縣十二：犍道，莽曰樊治。江陽，武陽，有鐵官。莽曰戡成。南安，有鹽官、鐵官。資中，符，溫水南至警入黠水，黠水亦南至警入江。莽曰符信。</p>	<p>(1) Hanshu 1962 Zhonghua shuju Juan 28 Page 1602</p> <p>(2) Hanshu 1962 Zhonghua shuju Juan 28 Page 1599.</p> <p>(3) Hanshu 1962 Zhonghua shuju Juan 28 Page 1599.</p>
31	Han	<p>Hanfa county 漢髮縣, in Fuling commandery, was known for its salt wells.</p> <p>It neighboured the RangDan 獐蜃 and Chanyi 蟾夷 non-Han groups</p> <p>Note : Hanjia 漢葭縣 county is located 100 li East of the commandery seat. Since the seat was in Hanfu (today Pengshui county, Yushan district), this would place Hanjia in today's Qianjiang county. Liu Lin suggests that the name Hanjia corresponds to 漢髮縣.</p>	Section Bazhi	<p>漢髮縣，有鹽井。</p> <p>諸縣北有獐，蜃，又有蟾夷也。</p>	<p>Huayang Guozhi 1984 Bashu shushe Juan 1 Page 89.</p>

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32	Han	Danxing county, in Fuling commandery, was known for its cinnabar resources. Note : Cinnabar resources are still known today in Tongren district, Guizhou province.	See also Taiping huanyu ji Section Fuzhou 涪州 Juan 120	丹興縣，蜀時省。山出名丹。	Huayang Guozhi 1984 Bashu shushe Juan 1 Page 87.
33	Han	Ji county 枳縣 is located 400 li east from Ba commandery, when traveling across the gorges upstream the Yangzi (now as the crow flies 80 kilometers). The land is barren.	Section Bazhi See also Shuijingzhu Juan 36 Section Jiangshui	枳縣，郡東四百裡，治涪陵水會。土地確瘠。多人 士，有章，常，連，黎，牟，陽，郡冠首也。	Huayang Guozhi 1984 Bashu shushe juan 1 page 66.
34	140 CE	census numbers for 永和五年 140 CE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hanzhong commandery 3506 Ba commandery 3507 Guanghan commandery 3507 Shu commandery 3508 Qianwei commandery 3509 Zangke commandery 3510 Yuecui commandery 3511 Yizhou commandery 3512 Yongchang commandery 3513 Guanghan dependent state <i>shuguo</i> 3514 Shujun dependent state <i>shuguo</i> 3515 Qianwei dependent state <i>shuguo</i> 3516 Zhuti commandery 3517 	Section dili zhi		Hou Hanshu 1971 Zhonghua shuju Juan 23 Pages 35 05 to 3554.

No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
35	140-154 CE	Between 140 CE and 154 CE, the Three Gorges area undergo an accelerated demographic growth, with a 70% increase in the population of Ba commandery, from 155,148 households (circa 543,018 individuals) to 232,697 households (circa 937,768 individuals).	Section Jun guo zhi He Shiwei 2012:85 notes that the size of households (hu 户) is not stable through history. Zhong Liqiang et al. 2001	永和五年戶二十萬八千四百八十六(...)	Hou Hanshu 1971 Zhonghua shuju Juan 19 Page 3389.
36	86 BCE	30,000 men uprising, mixed Han-and-Tribes from several commanderies and counties yi 邑 of modern Guizhou (Zangge, Tanzhi, Tongbin). The governor of Yi Zhou (province) is killed. After losing 4000 men to the rebels, the official army wins, captures more than 50,000 men and 10,000 livestock heads.	Section Xinanyi zhuan Also mentioned in Hua Yang Guo Zhi Juan 4 section Nanzhong Zhi	孝昭始元元年，益州廉頭、姑繒民反，殺長吏。牂柯、談指、同並等二十四邑，凡三萬餘人皆反。遣水衡都尉發蜀郡、犍為奔命萬餘人擊牂柯，大破之。后三歲，姑繒、葉榆復反，遣水衡都尉呂辟胡將郡兵擊之。辟胡不進，蠻夷遂殺益州太守，乘勝與辟胡戰，士戰及溺死者四千餘人。明年，復遣軍正王平與大鴻臚田廣明等並進，大破益州，斬首捕虜五萬餘級，獲畜產十餘萬。上曰：“鉤町侯亡波率其邑君長人民擊反者，斬首捕虜有功，其立亡波為鉤町王。大鴻臚廣明賜爵關內侯，食邑三百戶。”后間歲，武都氏人反，遣執金吾馬適建、龍叵侯韓增與大鴻臚廣明將兵擊之	Hanshu 1962 Zhonghua shuju Juan 95 Page 384 3.

No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
37	14 CE	<p>Unhappy with the administrative reforms led by Wang Mang (ruled 9-23 CE) on the frontier, Rebellion in Yi Zhou by the chiefs of the Dongcan 栋蚕, and Ruodou 若豆 tribes. Wang Mang sends men from Ba, Shu and Qianwei commanderies, of which 6-7 out of them die out of disease, and Yi Zhou resists.</p> <p>3 years later, Wang Mang sends another 100,000 men from Tianshui 天水, Longxi 隴西 as well as Ba and Shu commanderies, to the South-western tribes territories. But Yi Zhou keeps resisting, and tens of thousands of these men die. Yuecui commandery's governor is killed and a self-declared Qiongnu 邛谷 king replaces him. 2 or more attempts by Wang Mang to pacify the region fail in 19-21 AD.</p>	<p>Section Xinanyi zhuan</p> <p>Also mentioned in Hanshu Juan 99</p> <p>"Wang Mang Zhuan – Zhong" and Hou Hanshu Juan 86 and Huayang Guozhi 1984 Bashu shushe Juan 2.</p>	<p>王莽篡位，改漢制，貶鉤町王以為侯。王邯怨恨，牂柯大尹周欽詐殺邯。邯弟承攻殺欽，州郡擊之，不能服。三邊蠻夷愁擾盡反，復殺益州大尹程隆。莽遣平蠻將軍馮茂發巴、蜀、犍為吏士，賦斂取足於民，以擊益州。出入三年，疾疫死者什七，巴、蜀騷動。莽徵茂還，誅之。更遣寧始將軍廉丹與庸部牧史熊大發天水、隴西騎士，廣漢、巴、蜀、犍為吏民十萬人，轉輸者合二十萬人，擊之。始至，頗斬首數千，其后軍糧前后不相及，士卒飢疫，三歲餘死者數萬。而粵嵩蠻夷任責亦殺太守枚根，自立為邛谷王。會莽敗漢興，誅貴，復舊號雲。</p>	<p>Hanshu 1962</p> <p>Zhonghua shuju Juan 95</p> <p>Page 384 6.</p>
38	42 CE	<p>the Dongcan 栋蚕 and several other tribes of modern Yunnan, including the Kunming, pushes Han administration back to modern Zhaotong (then Zhuti 朱提 commandery). The Han general Liu Shang sends more than 13,000 men from Guanghan, Qianwei and Shu.</p>		<p>建武十八年，夷渠帥棟蠶與姑復、牂榆、牂牁、連然、滇池、建憐、昆明諸種反叛，殺長吏。益州太守繁勝與戰而敗，退保朱提。十九年，遣武威將軍劉尚等發廣漢、犍為、蜀郡人及朱提夷，合萬三千人擊之。尚軍遂度瀘水，入益州界。群夷聞大兵至，皆棄壘奔走，尚獲其羸弱、谷畜。二十年，進兵與棟蠶等連戰數月，皆破之。明年正月，追至不韋，斬棟蠶帥，凡首虜七千餘人，得生口五千七百人，馬三千疋，牛羊三萬餘頭，諸夷悉平。</p>	<p>Hou Hanshu 1971</p> <p>Zhonghua shuju Juan 86</p> <p>Page 284 6.</p>

No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
39	76 CE	Ailao 哀牢 king Leilao 类牢 rises 3000 men, countered by a mixed Han-and-Tribes 9000 men army from Yuecui, Yi Zhou and Yongchang commanderies. 30,000 killed		純與哀牢夷人約，邑豪歲輸布貫頭衣二領，鹽一斛，以為常賦，夷俗安之。純自為都尉、太守，十年卒官。建初元年，哀牢王類牢與守令忿爭，遂殺守令而反叛，攻越雋唐城。太守王尋奔牂牁。哀牢三千餘人攻博南，燔燒民舍。肅宗募發越雋、益州、永昌夷漢九千人討之。明年春，邪龍縣昆明夷鹵承等應募，率種人與諸郡兵擊類牢於博南，大破斬之。傳首洛陽，賜鹵承帛萬匹，封為破虜傍邑侯。	Hou Hanshu 1971 Zhonghua shuju Juan 86 Page 2851.
40	118 CE	a county-level official in modern Lijiang is killed by men from Yuecui commandery, fed up with corruption and taxes. Subsequently, 100,000 men uprise in Yi Zhou, touching 20 counties. 30,000 are killed and the rebellion fails.		延光二年春，旄牛夷叛，攻零關，殺長吏，益州刺史張喬與西部都尉擊破之。於是分置蜀郡屬國都尉，領四縣如太守。桓帝永壽二年，蜀郡夷叛，殺略吏民。延熹二年，蜀郡三襄夷寇蠶陵，殺長吏。四年，犍為屬國夷寇郡界，益州刺史山昱擊破之，斬首千四百級，餘皆解散。	Hou Hanshu 1971 Zhonghua shuju Juan 86 Page 2857.
41	Early 160s	Ma Liang, was made chancellor by Liu Bei in 221 CE, and sent in a campaign against the Wuxi Man. The campaign is mentioned in the later Shuijijing zhu treatise, included in the description of the Yuan River.	Section Yuanshui	沅水又東與序溪合，水出武陵郡義陵縣鄒梁山，西北流逕義陵縣，王莽之建平縣也，治序溪。其城，劉備之柝歸。馬良出五溪，綏撫蠻夷，良率諸蠻所築也。所治序溪，最為沃壤，良田數百頃，特宜稻，脩作無廢，又西北入于沅。沅水又東合淑水，水導源淑溪，北流注沅。沅水又東逕辰陽縣南，東合辰水，水出縣三山谷，東南流，獨母水注之，水源南出龍門山，歷獨母溪，北入辰水。辰水又逕其縣北，舊治在辰水之陽，故即名焉。《楚辭》所謂夕宿辰陽者也，王莽更名會亭矣。辰水又右會沅水，名之為辰溪口。武陵有五溪，謂雄溪、橘溪、無溪、酉溪，辰溪其一焉。夾溪悉是蠻左所居，故謂此蠻五溪蠻也。	Shuijing zhu 1999 Jiangsu guji chubanshe Juan 37 Page 3077

No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
42	156-189 CE	Han times Wanning county 万宁县 was established under the reign of Emperor Xiaoling (156-189 CE). It was part of Fuling commandery.	Section Bazhi	孝靈帝時置，本名永寧。	Huayang Guozhi 1984 Bashu shushe Juan 1 Page 88.
43	184 CE	The Celestial Masters replaced the local representatives of the central government with libationers (jiju 祭酒) who demanded only a modest, fixed contribution of rice from each family. The new tax replaced a local tax required by the Han administration. The official sources first tell us of a medium (yaowu 妖巫 or wuren 巫人) named Zhang Xiu 張脩, from Ba commandery and his followers (referred to as “grain bandits” mizei 米賊, “grain mediums” miwu 米巫 or “grain people” mimin 米民). According to De Crespigny, the sect leader’s name is contradictory among sources, possibly meaning that there were several competing leaders: “Zhang Xiu of Ba commandery had cured people’s sickness by magical tricks, and his teaching was in many respects like that of Zhang Jue. He ordered families where there was sickness to offer up five dou of rice, and he was called the Five Pecks of Rice Teacher. In the autumn, in the seventh month, Zhang Xiu gathered his followers and made rebellion and they raided the commanderies and counties. The people of that time called them the Rice Rebels.	Translated by De Crespigny 1989:185	巴郡張脩以妖術為人療病，其法略與張角同，令病家出五斗米，號‘五斗米師’。秋，七月，修聚眾反，寇郡縣，時人謂之‘迷米賊’。 (汉纪五十灵帝中平元年; 184 CE)	Zizhi tongjian 1956 Zhonghua shuju Juan 58 Page 1872.

No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
44	183 CE (142 CE to 198 CE)	<p>Zhang Daoling 张道陵, first religious leader of the Wudoumi sect and designated as patriarch of the later Daoist church, is supposed to have received his investiture in 142 CE, after his immigration from Jiangsu to Sichuan (Kleeman 2002 24).</p> <p>The Zhang lineage, up to Zhang Daoling's grandson Zhang Lu 张路, established an explicit and centralized religious geography competing with the imperial administration. What he proposed was another bureaucracy to refer to, which strongly correlated terrestrial fields to celestial domains, dividing the territory of present day Sichuan province into "dioceses" (zhi 治).</p> <p>The process extended over many decades: the first 24 dioceses were created by Zhang Daoling in 143 CE, the next 12 by his son Zhang Heng 张衡 in 196 CE, and the last eight by Zhang Lu in 198 CE.</p> <p>The term for diocese, <i>zhi</i> 治, stands for "control" over the forces of nature such as water, but also protection from demonic influences.</p> <p>Nodes on important routes called "charity lodgings" (<i>yishe</i> 義舍) replaced the postal relays of the imperial administration (<i>tingzhuan</i> 亭傳).</p> <p>This was not entirely a static system, but households were still affiliated to a diocese, and records called "life registers" were maintained, on the basis of which a tax of rice was raised, possibly less demanding than the official tax</p>	See Kleeman 1998:68.	<p>Biography of Zhang Lu, from the Wudoumi sect to the establishment of dioceses and ultimately is coronated king of the Hanning 漢寧 theocracy : 魯字公旗。初，祖父陵，順帝時客於蜀，學道鶴鳴山中，造作符書，以惑百姓。受其道者輒出米五斗，故謂之‘米賊’。陵傳子衡，衡傳於魯，魯遂自號‘師君’。其來學者，初名為‘鬼卒’，後號‘祭酒’。祭酒各領部眾，眾多者名曰‘理頭’。皆校以誠信，不聽欺妄，有病但令首過而已。諸祭酒各起義舍於路，同之亭傳，縣置米肉以給行旅。食者量腹取足，過多則鬼能病之。犯法者先加三原，然後行刑。不置長吏，以祭酒為理，民夷信向。朝廷不能討，遂就拜魯鎮夷中郎將，領漢寧太守，通其貢獻。韓遂、馬超之亂，關西民奔魯者數萬家。時人有地中得玉印者，羣下欲尊魯為漢寧王。</p>	Hou Hanshu 1971 Zhonghua shuju Juan 75 Pages 2435-2436.

No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
45	183 CE- 184 CE	Zhang Jue set up 36 Divisions. A division was the equivalent of an army under a general. A large division had more than 10 000 men, a small division had 6000 or 7000 men, and each of them had appointed leaders. They spread the word that "The azure sky is dead, and a Yellow Heaven will take its place. When the year is jiazi great fortune will come to the world". They used chalk to write the characters jiazi 甲子 on the walls of the capital city, on the gates of the official buildings, and on the yamen of the provincial and commandery administrations.	Translated by De Crespigny 1989 Vol 1: 175.	角遂置三十六方，方，猶將軍也，大方萬余人，小方六七千，各立渠帥，訛言‘蒼天已死，黃天當立，歲在甲子，天下大吉。’以白土書京城寺門及州郡官府，皆作‘甲子’字。 (靈帝光和元年；183)	Zizhi tongjian 1956 Zhonghua shuju Juan 58 Page 1865.
46	184 CE	The sentence announcing 184 CE as a jiazi year, the beginning of a new cosmic cycle : "Azure Heaven is dead; Yellow Heaven should rule. The year is /jiazi, which is a very good omen for the world."	Translated by Espeset 2009:24. Section 皇甫嵩朱雋列 傳六十一	初，鉅鹿張角自稱‘大賢良師’奉事黃老道，畜養弟子……角因遣弟子八人使余四方……遂置三十六方，方，猶將軍號也，大方萬余人，小方六七千，各立渠帥，訛言‘蒼天已死，黃天當立，歲在甲子，天下大吉。’以白土書京城寺門及州郡官府，皆作‘甲子’字。	Hou Hanshu 1971 Zhonghua shuju Juan 71 Page 2299.
47	185 CE	Ma Xiang, Zhao Zhi, and other bandits of Yi Province raised troops at Mianzhu, called themselves Yellow Turbans, and killed the inspector Que Jian. They went forward and attacked Ba commandery and Qianwei, and in the matter of a few weeks they had defeated and destroyed the forces of three commanderies. Their army was several thousand men, and Ma Xiang called himself Son of Heaven.	Translated by De Crespigny. 1989. Vol 1: 206.	益州賊馬相、趙祗等起兵綿竹，自號黃巾，殺刺史卻儉，進擊巴郡、犍為，旬月之間，破壞三郡，有眾數萬，自稱天子(…)	Zizhi tongjian 1956 Zhonghua shuju Juan 59 page 1889.

No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
48	118 CE 125-144 CE 176 CE 179-182 CE	The Banshun invaded Ba commandery. Punitive expeditions were sent continuously but they could not be defeated. The Emperor wished to send a big army, but when he asked an official responsible for Yizhou province, Cheng Bao from Hanzhong, the latter answered : 'The seven clans of the Banshun helped the Qin government and they should be rewarded for it. When in the Yongchu era the Qiang entered the Han valley, destroying commanderies and counties, it was the Banshun who saved (...)	See alternative translation in De Crespigny 1989.Vol1:172 De Crespigny 1989.Vol2:528 De Crespigny 1984:107. The tribe is described in the Huayang Guozhi (Juan 1,Page 34-35) as having a white tiger as symbol. Their early rebellion under Emperor Shun is described in the Huayang Guozhi (1984, Juan 1,Page 52-53).	(1) 板楯蠻寇亂巴郡，連年討之，不能尅。帝欲大發兵，以問益州計吏漢中程包，對曰：‘板楯七姓，自秦世立功，復其租賦。其人勇猛善戰。昔永初中，羌人入漢川，郡縣破壞，得板楯救之(...)’ (2) 靈帝光和三年，巴郡板楯復叛，寇掠三蜀及漢中諸郡。靈帝遣御史中丞蕭瑗督益州兵討之，連年不能尅。帝欲大發兵，乃問益州計吏，考以征討方略。漢中上計程包對曰：「板楯七姓，射殺白虎立功，先世復為義人。其人勇猛，善於兵戰。昔永初中，羌人漢川，郡縣破壞，得板楯救之，羌死敗殆盡，故號為神兵。羌人畏忌，傳語種輩，勿復南行。至建和二年，羌復大入，實賴板楯連摧破(1)之。」	(1) Zizhi tongjian 1956 Zhonghua shuju juan 58 page 1863. (2) Hou Hanshu 1971 Zhonghua shuju Juan 86 Page 2843.
49	178 CE	These years, offices were opened in the West and put on sale at different prices: 'two thousand dan 20 millions, four hundred dan 4 millions; according to one's virtue the price was reduced to a half or a third, and the sum was stored in a place in Xiyuan. The announcements were displayed on que towers. According the quality of the county, the salary varied. The rich paid first, the poor had to pay twice as much after they entered the post.	See alternative translation in De Crespigny 1989. Vol 1:152	是歲，初開西邸賣官，入錢各有差：二千石二十萬；四百石四百萬；其以德次應選者半之，或三分之一於西園立庫以貯之。或詣闕上書占令長，隨縣好醜，豐約有賈。富者則先入錢，貧者到官然後倍輸。	Zizhi tongjian 1956 Zhonghua shuju Juan 57 page 1849.

No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
50	Later Han	<p>In the troubled years of the end of the Eastern Han, Xie Yiwu 謝夷吾 requested his son to bury in a deep grave with no mound, for fear of looting.</p> <p>Note: The looting wouldn't occur too late after the definitive closure of the tomb, since 'Wang Ch'ung (AD27-ca100) refers to the stench which rose to heaven when graves were opened as the product of decayed foods placed in the grave' (Lunheng, juan 21, page 906, translated in Thorp 2005:213.)</p>	Cited in Brashier 2011:176.	<p>後以行春乘柴車，從兩吏，冀州刺史上其儀序失中，有損國典，左轉下邳令。豫剋死日，如期果卒。勅其子曰：「漢末當亂，必有發掘露骸之禍。」使懸棺下葬，墓不起墳。</p> <p>時博士勃海郭鳳亦好圖讖，善說災異，吉凶占應。先自知死期，豫令弟子市棺斂具，至其日而終。</p>	Hou Hanshu 1971 Zhonghua shuju Juan 82 Page 2715.
51	211 CE 216-217 CE 215-219 CE	<p>As his territory being of strategic importance for the control of the southwest, the religious leader Zhang Lu came under attack from both Cao Cao and his rival Liu Bei 劉備 (161-223) in 211 CE.</p> <p>Zhang Lu (also called "the hereditary leader Zhang" <i>Zhang xishi</i> 張係師) died in 216-217 CE, and from this date onwards Zhang's millennial kingdom faced political unrest. Between 215 and 219 CE, inhabitants of the Hanzhong area were forced to migrate northwards, possibly in several successive waves, which led to the spread of the seeds of this proto-Daoist religion to other parts of the empire, although it was persecuted by Cao Cao among numerous other "unorthodox cults" (<i>yinsi</i> 淫祀).</p>	Another source given in Bokenkamp 1997 for the defeat of Zhang Lu against Cao Cao is the 255 CE text from the Daoist Canon ("Family Commands and Precepts of the Great Dao" Zhengyi fawen Tianshi jiaojie kejing HY 788 :16b),	<p>明年，曹操破張魯，定漢中。</p>	Hou Hanshu 1971 Zhonghua shuju Juan 75 Page 2435.

No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
52	251 CE	Deng Zhi (d.251 CE), official of Shu Han in the Three Kingdoms period, entered Fuling commandery twice: (1) To counter the uprising of the <i>daxing</i> of Fuling and move them to Shu. (2) When the governor of Fuling is killed by an uprising of the <i>yishuai</i> 渠帥 and the people.	(1) Section Bazhi Fuling commandery (2) Book of Shu Section Deng Zhi zhuan See also Sanguo zhi 1971 Zhonghua shuju Juan 35 Zhuge liang zhuan Pages 911 to 937.	(1) 延熙十三年 (251 CE), 大姓徐巨反, 車騎將軍鄧芝討平之...乃移其豪徐、蘭、謝、范五千家於蜀, 為獵射官。... 晉初, 移弩十於馮栩蓮勺 (2) (延熙...)十一年, 涪陵國人殺都尉反叛, 芝率軍征討, 郎梟其渠帥, 百姓安堵。	(1) Huayang Guozhi 1984 Bashu shushe Juan 1 Pages 83-84. (2) Sanguo zhi 1971 Zhonghua shuju Juan 45 Page ?
53	222 CE 229 CE 268 CE	Struggle against the Wuxi man/Wuling Youxi man : (1) in 222 CE (2) in 229 CE (3) recorded by Fanrong 潘溶 (4) In 268 CE, Sun Hui, prefect of Wuling commandery, attempted to pacify the tribes ...	(1) Book of Shu Section Xianzhu zhuan (2) Book of Shu Section Ma Liang zhuan (3) Book of Wu Section Fan Rong zhuan also in the	(1) 二年春正月, 先主軍還秭歸, 將軍吳班、陳式水軍屯夷陵, 夾江東西岸。二月, 先主白秘歸率諸將進軍, 緣山截嶺, 於夷道狹亭駐營, 自猇山通武陵, 遣侍中馬良安慰五溪蠻夷, 咸相率響應。鎮北將軍黃權督江北諸軍, 與吳軍相拒於夷陵道。 (2) 先主稱尊號, 以良為侍中。及東征吳, 遣良入武陵招納五溪蠻夷, 蠻夷渠帥皆受印號, 咸如意指。會先主敗績於夷陵, 良亦遇害。先主拜良子秉為騎都尉。 (3) 五溪蠻夷叛亂盤結, 權假浚節, 督諸軍討之。信賞必行, 法不可干, 斬首獲生, 蓋以萬數, 自是羣蠻	(1) Sanguo zhi 1971 Zhonghua shuju juan 32 Page 890. (2) Sanguo zhi 1971 Zhonghua shuju juan 39

			<p>衰弱，一方寧靜。 (4)</p> <p>泰始二年，...吳武陵太守孫恢寇南浦，安蠻護軍楊宗討之，退走。羅獻因表以宗為武陵太守，住南浦誘恤武陵蠻夷，得二縣初附民。</p>	<p>Nanqi shu Juan 58 section Manzhuan (4) Section Bazhi</p>	<p>Page 983. (3) Sanguo zhi 1971 Zhonghua shuju juan 61 Page 1397. (4) Huayang Guozhi 1984 Bashu shushe juan 1 Page 74.</p>
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No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
54	Han to Jin (206 BCE-420 CE)	The <i>daxing</i> from Nanzhong, through a form of intermarriage with local populations designated in historical accounts by the term <i>huangye</i> 遼耶, are said to have evolved into local chieftains, designated by the term <i>yishuai</i> 夷帥.	Liu Lin commentary on Huayang Guozhi 1984:366 : '與夷為姓' could stand for '與夷為婚' (marriage). According to Meng Mo, the sound for huangye supposedly corresponds to the word for marriage in Yi language.	論議好譬喻物，謂之'夷經'。今南人言論，雖學者，亦半引'夷經'。與夷為姓曰「遼耶。」諸姓為「自有耶」。世亂、犯法，輒依之藏匿。或曰：有為官所法，夷或為執仇。與夷至厚者，謂之「百世遼耶」，恩若骨肉。故南人輕為禍變，恃此也。	Hua Yang Guo Zhi 1984 Bashu shushe Juan 4 Page 364.
55	313 CE	Bi 懿 When it belonged to Pingyi commandery 平夷郡, was located in the upper Chishui river system, and counted a 1,000 households.	Section Nanzhong zhi Pingyi commandery	平夷郡,晉(元)帝建興元年置，屬縣二，戶千。	Huayang Guozhi 1984 Bashu shushe Juan 4 Page 386.

No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
56	321 CE 618-626 CE	(1) The <i>taishou</i> 太守 of Jiangyang in war against the <i>Yi Liao</i> reached Zangke from Fuling. (2) under Tang emperor Wude (618-626 CE), a route connected the Wu River to Bi.	See also mentions of the Liao in Bei shi 北史 Zhonghua shuju 1983 Juan 95 Section Liao zhuan 僚傳 and Juan 136 section Yuzhou 渝州	(1) 玉衡十年春,晉江陽太守廬州侯瓚招降夷僚,修繕舟艦,為進取之計。預白寧州刺史王遜,請軍移拜洞,太守謝恕俱出涪陵,不能自前 (2) 一讓德匹年,招慰使內一安尸以務川當壯珂要路,須置郡以撫之	(1) Shiliuguo chunqiu, Juan 77 (2) Taiping huanyu ji Section Sizhou 思州
57		Yanjiang River 延江水 A whole section of the Shuijing zhu is devoted to the Wu River and its tributaries, under the name Yanjiang shui 延江水. Mentions of the Wu River in Huayang Guozhi Are found under the denomination Fushui 涪水.	section Yanjiang shui or Shuijing zhu 1984 Shanghai ren min chu ban she Juan 36 Pages 1111 to 1147. or Shuijing zhu 1957 Kexue chubanshe Juan 36 No page numbers.	(1) 延江水出犍為南廣縣,東至牂柯營縣,又東屈北流營縣,故犍為郡治也。縣有犍山,晉建興元年,置平夷郡,縣有營水,出犍為符縣而南入黠水。黠水亦。溫水一曰煖水,出犍為符縣而南入黠水。俱南入營水出符縣,南與溫水會。關駟謂之關水,俱南入營水。營水于其縣而東注延江水。延江水又與漢水合,水出犍為漢陽道山關谷,王莽之新通也。東至營邑入延江水也。 (2)	(1) Shuijing zhu shu 1999 Juan 36 Page 2798 (2) Shuijing zhu shu 1999 Juan 36 Pages 2966 to 2972.

No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
58	Tang	<p>Anle River 安樂水</p> <p>(1) The Anle River flows in this county, its waters originate in the South, in Bi county, Pingyi commandery, (now called) Ningzhou. To the North (downstream), the Anle River enters Han'an county in the east then through Fu county its water feeds the Yangzi river. ...</p> <p>(2) It is navigable until a certain point, and some old ports are still existing. Boats were pulled upstream by men, mostly full of salt. In the mountains around, a few stone paths are left too, leading from one river to another. By placename :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • p 4127 瀘州縣 • p 4128 江陽縣 • p 4128 合江縣 	<p>Ren Naiqiang thought that the Anle River corresponds to present-day Chishui River, where a county called 'Anle' was established in Southern Qi times. He thought that the Xibu river corresponds to present-day Xishui River. In Huayang Guozhi (1984, Juan 3, page 183, note no.18).</p>	<p>(1) 縣，故巴夷之地也。漢武帝建元六年，以唐蒙為中郎將，從萬人出巴符關者也。元鼎二年立，王莽之符信矣。縣治安樂水會，水源南通寧州平夷郡犍縣，北逕安樂縣界之東，又逕符縣下，北入江。縣長趙社遣吏先尼和，以永建元年十二月，詣巴郡，沒死成湍灘，子賢求喪不得，女緒年二十五歲，有二子，五歲以還，至二年二月十五日，尚不得喪，緒乃乘小船至父沒處，哀哭自沈，見夢告賢曰：至二十一日與父俱出。至日，父子果浮出江上。郡縣上言，為之立碑，以旌孝誠也。其鰥部之水，所未聞矣。或是水之殊目，非所究也。</p>	<p>(1) Shuijing zhu 1957 Kexue chubanshe Juan 33 No page numbers. Or Shuijing zhu 1999 Jian gsu guji chubanshe Juan 33 Page 2786. Or Shuijing zhu 1984 Juan 33 Shanghai renmin chubanshe Pages 1035 to 1064. (2) Yudi Jisheng</p>

				1992 Zhonghua shuju Juan 153 Pages 4127- 4128.

No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
59	Tang	<p>Xibu River 鰲部水</p> <p>From the East, passing through Fu county, then towards southeast, is the Xibu River, which flows Northeast of the Fu Pass.</p> <p>Note :</p> <p>The Xishui river route was important enough to leave some trace in written history. When covering the same area, the Huayang Guozhi and Shuijing zhu mention both the Anle River 安乐水, present-day Chishui River, and the Xibu River 鰲部水, present-day Xishui River. According to the Shuijing zhu, the Xibu River was accessible from the Fu pass.</p>	Also in Yan Gengwang 1986:1219.	<p>鰲部水</p> <p>又東過符縣北邪東南，鰲部水從符關東北注之</p>	Shuijing zhu 1999 Jiangsu guji chubanshe Juan 33 Page 2786.
60	Late Tang	<p>The tribes of the Five Streams set out the corpses of their deceased parents outside the village. After three years they were interred. The mourners strike drums and chant, feasting their kin and neighbors, with much dancing and performances. This continues for a month or more. During the days they spend their time making a coffin. Halfway up a high cliff above a river they chisel out a hole to inter the deceased and suspend the coffin with ropes from the top of the cliff. The higher the coffin is, the more filial grace is bestowed on the mourners. Throughout the rest of their lives, they do not sacrifice to or worship their ancestors. For the first three years of mourning they are prohibited to eat salt.</p> <p>Note:</p> <p>The commentary on filial piety, somehow the Confucian counterpart of the above translated inscription in Shanshuping, is useful to show the great cultural gap between viewers and the sites' makers atPan early date.</p>	Translated by Von Glahn 1987:229.	<p>五溪蠻，父母死，於村外闢其屍，三年而葬。打鼓路歌，親屬飲宴舞戲一月餘日。盡產為棺，餘臨江高山半肋鑿龕以葬之。自山上懸索下柩，彌高者以為至孝，即終身不復祀祭。初遭喪，三年不食鹽。</p>	Chaoye Qianzai (1979) 2012 Zhonghua shuju Juan 2 Page 40.

61	642 CE 908 CE 1074 CE 1120 CE	<p>Zhenzhou 溱州- Zhenxi 溱溪</p> <p>(1) In 642 CE, Zhenzhou controls the counties (xian) of Rongyi 榮懿 and Fuhuan 扶歡 and Yuelai 樂來. In 908 CE, it is renamed Zhenxi 溱溪. Households : 879, population : 5045 Distance to 京 : 3480 li Distance to 東都 : 4200 li</p> <p>(2) The <i>jimi</i> 羈縻 called Zhenzhou 溱州 controls the two counties (xian) of Rongyi and Fuhuan. in the 7th year of the Xining era (1074 CE), Rongyi belonged to Nanping jun. On the 2nd year of the Daguan era (1108 CE), Zhenzhou was relocated and had the two counties of Zhenxi 溱溪 and Yelang.</p> <p>(3) On the 2nd year of the Xuanhe era (1120 CE), when the zhou and xian collapsed, the place was called Zhenxi 溱溪 'camp/mountain stronghold' (zhai), and served Nanping jun 南平軍.</p> <p>(3) The Tongdian describes it as a land inhabited by barbarians (古蠻夷之地).</p>	<p>(1) 溱州下 貞觀十六年(642 CE), 置溱州及榮懿、扶歡、樂來三縣。咸亨元年, 廢樂來縣。天寶元年(908 CE), 改為溱溪郡。乾元元年, 復為溱州。領縣二, 戶八百七十九, 口五千四百五十五。至京師三千四百八十里, 至東都四千二百里。</p> <p>(2) 榮懿 扶歡 已上二縣, 並貞觀十六年, 開山洞置。</p> <p>(2) 溱溪砦, 本羈縻溱州, 領榮懿、扶歡二縣; 熙寧七年(1074 CE), 招納, 置榮懿等砦, 隸恭州, 後隸南平軍。大觀二年(1120 CE), 別置溱州及溱溪、夜郎兩縣; 宣和二年, 廢州及縣, 以溱溪砦為名, 隸南平軍。</p> <p>(3) 溱州 : 古蠻夷之地。大唐置溱州, 或為溱溪郡。</p> <p>溱溪郡東至.....南至.....西至.....北至.....東南到.....西南到.....西北到.....東北到.....去西京三千四百八十里, 去東京四千二百里。戶二千一百, 口九千二百。</p>	<p>(1) Jiu Tangshu Juan 40 Page 1629.</p> <p>(2) Songshi 1985 Zhonghua shuju Juan 49 Page 222 9.</p> <p>(3) Tong Dian 通典 Juan 183 Section gu Jingzhou 古荊州</p>
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No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
62	Song	<p>Nanping Jun 南平郡</p> <p>(1) Respective locations of Nanchuan commandery, Nanping commandery and Zhenxi commandery.</p> <p>(2) The tribes of <i>Nanping</i> 南平蠻 are described in the Tong Dian (801 CE)</p>	<p>The tribes of <i>Nanping</i> 南平蠻 are mentioned briefly in the Jiu Tangshu (Juan 19 page 666 and Juan 174 page 4519), but I did not find a clear mention of the <i>Nanping lao</i> 南平僚, recently put forward as having been active along the Caodu tributary of the Qi River in Tang times (First Conference on Nanping Lao Studies 首届南平僚学术研讨会 organized by Qijiang Cultural Relics Office).</p>	<p>(1) 南川郡東至南平郡界一十里。南至溱溪郡界五十里。西至南平郡界三百六十里。北至南平郡二百六十里。東南到溱溪郡界三百五十里。西南到溱溪郡界七十里。西北到南平郡二百六十里。東北到南平郡五十七里。去西京三千九百五十里，去東京三千六百里。戶二千四百七十七，口一萬三百七十五。</p> <p>(2) 南平郡東至涪陵郡四百六十里。南至南川郡二百六十里。西至巴川郡二百里。北至潞山郡四百四十里。東南到南川郡二百九十三里。西南到瀘川郡七百五十里。西北到潞山郡潞水縣二百里。東北到涪陵郡三百七十里。去西京三千二百三十七里，去東京三千四百四十里。戶七千三百九十三，口二萬八千九十八。</p> <p>(2) 南平蠻北與涪州接，部落四千餘戶。山有毒草及沙蟲、蝮蛇。人並樓居，登梯而上，號為「干欄」。其人美髮，為椎髻。土多女少男。為婚之法，女氏必先貨求男族。貧人無以嫁女，多賣與富人為婢。俗皆婦人執役。其王姓朱氏，號為劍荔王。大唐貞觀三年，遣使入朝，以其地隸渝州。</p>	<p>(1) Tong Dian 1988 Zhonghua shuju Section Zhou Jun 5 Gu Liangzhou (2) Tong Dian Nanping Man</p>

No	date	summary of event or translation	other ref.	chinese text	source
63	1588 CE 1831 CE	<p>Qijiang 綦江</p> <p>(0) 古称南溪、夜郎溪、焚{bó}溪</p> <p>(1) The Qi River originates in Yelang</p> <p>(2) In the 3 centuries between 1569 and 1922, 53 occurrences of flooding were recorded, sometimes happening in consecutive years, and often alternating with periods of severe draught.</p> <p>Ming times chronicles (1588) record the population having to eat grass and tree bark and innumerable deaths by famine in the years.</p>	<p>The middle and lower course of the Qi River belong to a rather dry area of the Sichuan Basin.</p> <p>Despite the taming of the river in modern times, the situation continues between the years 1961 and 1980.</p>	<p>(1) 江發源夜郎，作蒼帛色，故名綦</p> <p>(2) 清道光九年、十年、十一年並大水，而十一年（1831年）水且入城，於是南關以東大析裂，民居半蕩析，並北關亦壞，將不復成縣治矣。</p> <p>明萬歷十六年（1588年），大旱，民掘草根為食。萬歷十七年，5大旱民掘草根、削樹皮充飢，死者無數</p>	<p>(1) Shuzhong mingshen gji Zhonghua shuju 1985.</p> <p>(2) Qijiang xianzhi</p>

11.2. Appendix to Chapter 3: Survey

11.2.1. Fieldwork calendar (2010-2016)

date	region	location	Site name	content	contact
2010 to 2013 Preliminary fieldwork					
2010	North Sichuan	Santai county		decorated Han cliff tombs	none
2010	North Sichuan	Zhongjiang county	Ganjuliangzi	decorated Han cliff tombs	none
2010	North Sichuan	Zhongjiang county	Taliangzi	decorated Han cliff tombs	none
2010	North Sichuan	Zhongjiang county	Bailinpo	decorated Han cliff tombs	none
2010	North Sichuan	Zhongjiang county	Songlingzui	decorated Han cliff tombs	none
2010	North Sichuan	Zhongjiang county	Guangfu	decorated Han cliff tombs	none
2010	North Sichuan	Pengshan county	Jiangkou	decorated Han cliff tombs	none
2010	North Sichuan	Qingshen county	Ruifeng	reconverted in Buddhist shrine under the Song dynasty	none
2010	Chengdu	Xindu		brick chamber burials	none
2010	Leshan		Mahao	decorated Han cliff tombs	none
2010	Leshan		Zhiziwan	decorated Han cliff tombs	none
2010	Leshan		Sanxiandong	covered in Song to Qing travellers' inscriptions	none
2010	Leshan		Hutouwan	decorated Han cliff tombs	none
2010	Leshan		Baiyandong	reconverted in Buddhist shrine under the Qing dynasty	none

date	region	location	Site Name	content	contact
2010	Leshan	车城镇	Xiaoba	vestibule hall with 3 rock-cut que pillars, two tombs, an unfinished antechamber, refined architectural decoration	none
2010	Central Sichuan	Anyue county	Citangpo	small-scale Han cliff tombs	none
2010	Central Sichuan	Anyue county	Dingjiaba	small-scale Han cliff tombs	none
2010	Central Sichuan	Anyue county	Piludong	reconverted in Buddhist shrine under the Song dynasty	none
2012	Central Sichuan	Neijiang City	Yanbianshan	rock-cut house-shaped sarcophagi	Li Wanxin 李万新 Neijiang office director
2012	Central Sichuan	Neijiang City	Guanyindong	rock-cut house-shaped sarcophagi and inscription	Li Wanxin 李万新 Neijiang office director
2012	Central Sichuan	Neijiang City	Daliangshan	rock-cut house-shaped sarcophagi	Li Wanxin 李万新 Neijiang office director
2012	Central Sichuan	Neijiang City	Hongying	house-shaped sarcophagi	Li Wanxin 李万新 Neijiang office director
2012	Central Sichuan	Neijiang City	Lulandong	house-shaped sarcophagi	Li Wanxin 李万新 Neijiang office director
2011	Central Chongqing	Bishan county		stone sarcophagi	Bishan Museum director
2011	Central Chongqing	Bishan county	Yongjia	small-scale Han cliff tombs	Bishan Museum director
2011	Central Chongqing	Bishan county	Tongliang	small-scale Han cliff tombs	Bishan Museum director
2011	Central Chongqing	Bishan county	Guangpu	small-scale Han cliff tombs	Bishan Museum director
2012	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Qijiang county	Simianshan	small-scale Han cliff tombs	Zhou Ling 周玲 Qijiang office director and Zeng Minghui 曾明怀 guide
2012	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Qijiang county	Baishulin	Eastern Han dynasty burials in niche-like caves dated inscription 172-178 CE	Zhou Ling 周玲 Qijiang office director and Zeng Minghui 曾明怀 guide
2012	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Qijiang county	Qigongzui	Eastern Han dynasty burials in niche-like caves dated inscription 165-180 CE	Zhou Ling 周玲 Qijiang office director and Zeng Minghui 曾明怀 guide

date	region	location	Site name	content	contact
2012	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Qijiang county	Shihutou	small-scale Han cliff tombs	Zhou Ling 周玲 Qijiang office director and Zeng Minghui 曾明怀 guide
2012	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Qijiang county	Shuanghetan g	Eastern Han dynasty burials in niche-like caves dated inscription 139 CE	Zhou Ling 周玲 Qijiang office director and Zeng Minghui 曾明怀 guide
2013	South Sichuan	Hengjiang county	Tiantanggou	Tang and Song dynasty cave burials attributed to "ethnic minorities"	none
2013	South Chongqing	Jiangjin district	Changgou	first dated niche-like cave (159-160)	none
2013	South Chongqing	Jiangjin district	Shikan	inscription 165 CE	none
2013	South Sichuan	Luzhou city	Museum	30 sarcophagi and coffins mostly unearthed in the 80s	Yan Manling 晏满玲 Luzhou Museum director 泸州博物馆
2013	South Sichuan	Hejiang county	Museum	40 sarcophagi and coffins mostly unearthed in the 80s	Jia Yutian 贾雨田 Hejiang Museum director 合江文物保护管理局
2014 Fieldwork 2 Contrasting TYPE 1 and TYPE 2, defining type 2					
2014	South Sichuan	Luzhou city	Dongbingting	TYPE 1 Han cliff tombs - 7 caves with sarcophagi	Yan Manling 晏满玲 Luzhou Museum director 泸州博物馆
2014	South Sichuan	Luzhou city	Longmatan	TYPE 1 Han cliff tombs	Yan Manling 晏满玲 Luzhou Museum director 泸州博物馆
2014	South Sichuan	Luzhou city	Museum	30 sarcophagi and coffins mostly unearthed in the 80s	Yan Manling 晏满玲 Luzhou Museum director 泸州博物馆
2014	South Sichuan	Hejiang county	Museum	40 sarcophagi and coffins mostly unearthed in the 80s	Jia Yutian 贾雨田 Hejiang Museum director 合江文物保护管理局
2014.04	West Chongqing	Dazu county	Youting	TYPE 1 Han cliff tombs	Liu Xiangao 刘贤高 Dazu Academy 大足石刻研究院
2014.04	West Chongqing	Dazu county	Baodingshan	reconverted in Buddhist shrine under the Song dynasty	Liu Xiangao 刘贤高 Dazu Academy 大足石刻研究院

date	region	location	Site name	content	contact
2014.04	South Sichuan	Gaochang county	Huangsan	vestibule hall with rock-cut que pillars, three tombs, refined architectural decoration	none
2014.04	South Sichuan	Changning county	Qigedong	Eastern Han dynasty burials in artificial caves with rock-cut coffins dated inscriptions 165-180 CE	none
2014.07	Western Hunan	Taoyuan county	Mayuanshish i	undated burials in artificial caves	none
2014.07	Western Hunan	Taoyuan county	Taoyuan	undated burials in artificial caves	none
2014.07	Western Hunan	Taoyuan county	Xiangziyan	undated burials in artificial caves	none
2014.10	North Guizhou	Chishui city	Ma'anshan	TYPE 1 Han cliff tombs	Zhou Bisu 周必素 Guizhou Provincial Office director
2014.10	North Guizhou	Chishui city	Wanyouhao	TYPE 1 Han cliff tombs	Zhou Bisu 周必素 Guizhou Provincial Office director
2014.10	North Guizhou	Chishui city	Guangdu	Eastern Han dynasty burials in niche-like caves	Zhou Bisu 周必素 Guizhou Provincial Office director
2014.10	North Guizhou	Xishui county	Sanchahe	Eastern Han dynasty burials in niche-like caves dated inscription 223 CE	Chen Cong 陈聪 Xishui County Office
2014.10	North Guizhou	Xishui county	Shaxi	Eastern Han dynasty burials in niche-like caves	Chen Cong 陈聪 Xishui County Office
2014.11	Chongqing city	Cultural Heritage Research Institute		Discussing stratigraphy, settlement patterns and tomb location in the Three Gorges area, looking at artefacts excavated from eastern han cliff tombs in storage.	Fan Gang
2014.11	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Hengshan district	Erdengyan	TYPE 2 cave burials	Zhou Ling 周玲 Qijiang office director and Zeng Minghuai 曾明怀 guide
2014.11	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Tinghe village	Qigongzui	TYPE 2 cave burials	
2014.11	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Zhongfeng district	Laodongyan	TYPE 2 cave burials	
2014.11	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Zhongfeng district	Zhuanfang laodongyan	TYPE 2 cave burials	
2014.11	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Zhongfeng district	Tonggengzi	TYPE 2 cave burials	

date	region	location	Site name	content	contact
2014.11	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Zhongfeng district	Qikongzi heba	TYPE 2 cave burials	
2014.11	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Zhongfeng district	Baishulin	TYPE 2 cave burials	
2014.11	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Yongcheng district	Miaoziding	TYPE 2 cave burials	
2014.11	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Guofu district	Shatai	TYPE 2 cave burials	
2014.11	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Guofu district	Xianligang	TYPE 2 cave burials	
2014.11	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Dongxi district	Qikongzi (Fulin)	TYPE 2 cave burials	
2014.12	Chongqing city	Cultural Heritage Research Institute		Preparing the Fengdu-Shizhu fieldwork, discussing parallels with the tusi system.	Meeting with Yuan Dongshang 袁东山 and Wang Yu 王豫
2014.12	East Chongqing	Fengdu county	Nanjiang	Tang to Song dynasty burials in niche-like caves	Fengdu office director
2014.12	East Chongqing	Fengdu county	Guanyinsi	Tang to Song dynasty burials in niche-like caves	Fengdu office director
2014.12	East Chongqing	Fengdu county	Shimahe	Tang to Song dynasty burials in niche-like caves	Fengdu office director
2014.12	East Chongqing	Fengdu county	Shanshuping	Tang to Song dynasty burials in niche-like caves	Fengdu office director
2014.12	East Chongqing	Shizhu county	Guanzhuang kou	Eastern Han dynasty burials in niche-like caves dated inscription 180 CE	Shizhu museum staff
2014.12	East Chongqing	Shizhu county	Dongsanzhai	Eastern Han dynasty burials in niche-like caves	Shizhu museum staff
2014.12	Chongqing city	Cultural Heritage Research Institute		Preparing next fieldwork to Fuling County and Banan County.	Meeting with Bai Jiujiang, vice-director at Chongqing Cultural Heritage Research Institute
2015 Fieldwork n°3 Filling the gaps along the Qi River and between TYPE 2 areas and pushing the limits					

date	region	location	Site name	content	contact
2015.5	Chongqing, Hubei and Hunan Provinces			visiting provincial level archaeological institutes, excavation sites and museums in the Three Gorges Area	10 days fieldtrip with Professors Wei Jian 魏坚 and Li Meitian 李梅田 from the Archaeology Department in Renmin University
2015.6	Western Hubei	Lichuan county	Qikongzi		Sun Ru 孙孺 Lichuan office director
2015.6	Western Hubei	Lichuan county	Dutingshan		Sun Ru 孙孺 Lichuan office director
2015.6	Western Hubei	jianshi	Toubayan		Wang Zengpu 王振普 Jianshi office director and 石大平 guide
2015.6	Western Hubei	jianshi	Dajingpo		Wang Zengpu 王振普 Jianshi office director and 石大平 guide
2015.7	South Chongqing	Banan district		hired two stonemasons to reconstruct a two layers recessed door in hard sandstone, and a 1,2 cubic meter cave in soft sandstone in Banan County, Chongqing, registering the whole process.	Li Ming 黎明 Banan office director and Zou Yi 邹毅 guide
2015.7	South Chongqing	Banan district	Wumacun		Li Ming 黎明 Banan office director and Zou Yi 邹毅 guide
2015.7	South Chongqing	Banan district	Suobian		Li Ming 黎明 Banan office director and Zou Yi 邹毅 guide
2015.7	South Chongqing	Banan district	Qishubian		Li Ming 黎明 Banan office director and Zou Yi 邹毅 guide
2015.7	South Chongqing	Fuling district	Dashibao		Huang Hai 黄海 Fuling office director and Liu Hai 刘海 guide
2015.7	South Chongqing	Fuling district	Chadian		Huang Hai 黄海 Fuling office director and Liu Hai 刘海 guide
2015.7	South Chongqing	Fuling district	Qikongdong		Huang Hai 黄海 Fuling office director and Liu Hai 刘海 guide
2016	last fieldwork (4 to 30 june 2016)	update on recent discoveries, checking my theory on the Zhenxi tributary			

date	region	location	Site name	content	contact
2016.6	North Guizhou	Xishui county	Huangjinwan	settlement	Zhang Gaikē 张改课 Guizhou Province Archaeological Institute
2016.6	North Guizhou	Xishui county	Fanjiazui		Zhang Gaikē 张改课 Guizhou Province Archaeological Institute
2016.6	North Guizhou	Xishui county	Yuanjiayou		Zhang Gaikē 张改课 Guizhou Province Archaeological Institute
2016.6	North Guizhou	Xishui county	Ruwei		Zhang Gaikē 张改课 Guizhou Province Archaeological Institute
2016.6	Chongqing city	Sichuan Fine Arts Institute Centre for Dazu Studies			meeting with Qin Zhen 秦臻
2016.6	Chongqing	Qu county		han pillars	meeting with Qin Zhen 秦臻
2016.6	Chongqing	Qu county	Chengba 城坝	Han settlement	meeting with Qin Zhen 秦臻
2016.6	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Zhenxi tributary	Songlingang	165 CE dated inscription, decorated niche-like cave	周玲 Qijiang office director and 曾明 怀 guide
2016.6	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Zhenxi tributary	Huanglangbi an/Shihutou	assembles several elements that are not found elsewhere in the Qi River area, and that are instead commonly encountered in Sichuanese rock-cut caves. The elements include depictions which belong to the iconography of the Queen Mother of the West, a couple holding the sun and moon disks, a bird in high relief, architectural elements such as line carved tiled roof eaves, which are more often encountered in TYPE 1 caves, lead to suggest that the area was more exposed to the passage of ideas from the Sichuan plain	周玲 Qijiang office director and 曾明 怀 guide
2016.6	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Zhenxi tributary	Daokaimen		周玲 Qijiang office director and 曾明 怀 guide
2016.6	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Zhenxi tributary	Xinliangqiao/Gaokanzi		周玲 Qijiang office director and 曾明 怀 guide

date	region	location	Site name	content	contact
2016.6	Qi river (South Chongqing)	Zhenxi tributary	Beibing		周玲 Qijiang office director and 曾明怀 guide
2016.6	Chengdu city	Sichuan University Depart. of Archaeology			Meeting with Wang Yu 王煜, Huo Wei 霍巍 and Zhao Deyun 赵德云
2016.6	Chengdu suburbs		Xinjin	biggest rock-cut cemetery excavated in the Sichuan Basin so far	Suo Dehao 索德浩 Chengdu Municipal Archaeological Office and Wang Yu 王煜
2016.6	Chengdu suburbs		Huayang	Complete sequence of Western Han, Early Eastern Han and Late Eastern Han cliff tombs. Presence of an intermediary stage of vertical shaft + horizontal tunnel.	Suo Dehao 索德浩 Chengdu Municipal Archaeological Office and Wang Yu 王煜

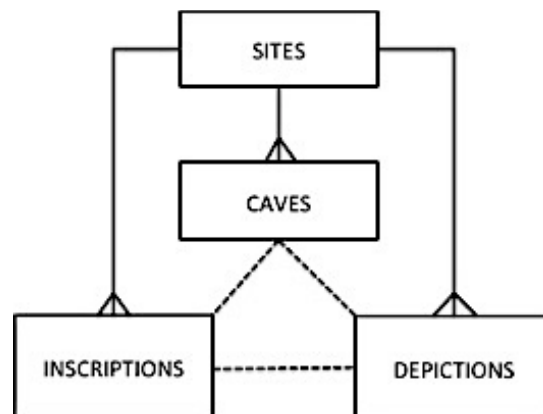
11.2.2. Surveyed sites locations (2013-2016)

N°	Site name	Lat	Long
1	Baishulin	28.90416667	106.4425000
2	Chadian	29.74788889	107.4150556
3	Changgou	28.69776667	106.4639222
4	Changqiuwan	29.37377778	107.2265556
5	Dashibao	29.46694444	107.0844444
6	Dianyiping	29.72175	107.3884722
7	Dongbingting	28.91388889	105.46583333
8	Erdengyan	29.11000000	106.71972222
9	Fanjiazui	28.25337316	105.9975221
10	Guanduyan	28.57555556	106.0780556
11	Guangting	28.91416667	105.4658333
12	Guangzhuangkou	30.29472222	108.2827778
13	Guankoucun	29.19983333	106.7048611
14	Guanyinsi	29.83713333	107.9810278
15	Huangsan	28.80555556	104.4080556
16	Jinzhuwan	30.44194444	108.4233333
17	Laodongyan	28.92666667	106.43750000
18	Lianghecun	29.25161111	106.6608889
19	Ma'anshan	28.5311166	105.7172668
20	Madatang	29.46702778	107.0723333
21	Maodingpo	29.47316667	107.1196389
22	Mayuan Shishi	28.75638889	111.2794444
23	Miaoziding	29.03944444	106.81194444
24	Mingyue	29.46522222	107.0474167
25	Nanjiang	29.83972222	107.9494444
26	Qigedong	28.66972222	105.0202861
27	Qigongzui	29.06941667	106.6651944
28	Qikongdong	29.57475	106.9730278
29	Qikongshi	29.41608333	107.0800556
30	Qikongzi (Hubei)	30.4625	108.5222222
31	Qikongzi (Chongqing)	28.72583333	106.67583333
32	Qikongzi Heba	28.93583333	106.43222222
33	Qinlongshan	29.46475	107.09575
34	Qinmu	29.49055556	107.1611111
35	Qishubian	29.20958333	106.9294444
36	Qiufaqikongzi	28.74561111	106.5996111
37	Qixingyan	28.75444444	111.2802778
38	Qixingyan B	28.75444444	111.2794444
39	Sanchahe	28.48666667	106.4138889
40	Sanmenzi	29.75183333	107.4010833
41	Shanshuping	29.77166667	108.0011111
42	Shatai	28.90861111	106.62416667
43	Shibantan	30.49076201	108.4504175

N°	Site name	Lat	Long
44	Shihutou	28.82888889	106.78194444
45	Shikan	28.70991944	106.3937389
46	Shilongba	30.43388889	108.4615
47	Shimahe	29.81472222	108.0102778
48	Shixiangzi	29.46694444	107.0951389
49	Shiyazi	29.47927778	107.1189444
50	Shizizui	29.421	107.1149444
51	Shuiying	29.73144444	107.3163056
52	Songlinggang	28.79972222	106.74944444
53	Suobian	29.23758333	106.693
54	Tiantanggou	28.48598206	104.3340987
55	Tonggengzi	28.88333333	106.44777778
56	Toubayan	30.69055556	109.7541667
57	Wumacun	29.23902778	106.7091944
58	X	30.47	108.4477778
59	Xiangziyan	28.753403	111.2816314
60	Xiaojingxia	30.815	109.8441667
61	Yanziwan	29.37275	107.2177778
62	Yaojiahe	30.82166667	109.8444444
63	Yutiantang	28.81611111	105.9861111

11.2.3. Structure of my database

My database is composed of sites, cave features, inscriptions and depictions:



Categories of data. Solid lines indicate one-to-many relations, dotted lines indicate questionable relations.

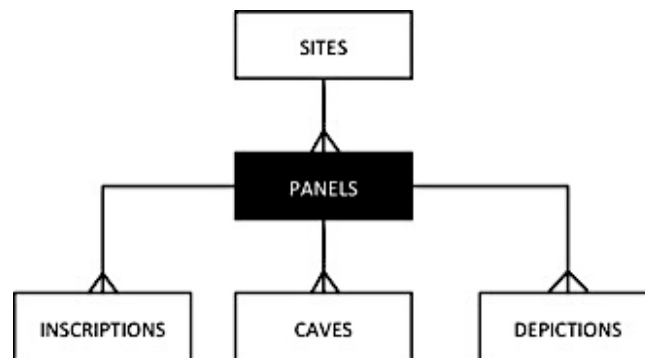
Below is a summary of the relations between these components:¹

- All sites contain caves, and caves are related to a site, but one site can contain more than one cave (a one-to-many relation).
- Some sites have one or more depictions and/or inscriptions, and all depictions/inscriptions belong to one site.

¹ A recapitulative table for all sites and all caves is provided in the General Appendix.

- Some sites have one or more depictions and/or inscriptions, but not all depictions/inscriptions can be associated with a specific cave.

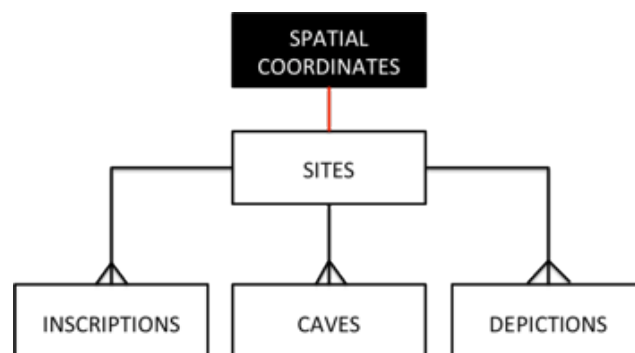
The relation between caves and inscriptions/depictions is not obvious, as the latter can be found on the cliff face in-between caves. One way to address this problem at the level of data collection would be to record the physical proximity of caves, depictions and inscriptions to each other. To record the inscriptions/depictions location on the cliff face, atlases and reports usually record the relative position of inscriptions/depictions to the cave opening. As an alternative to this cave-centred approach, one could borrow the notion of “panel”, as used in rock art studies, meaning a section of the rock face containing carvings. Such panels are used to address caves, inscriptions and depictions without a priori order:



The notion of panel as an intermediary grouping between sites and inscriptions/caves/depictions.

In a way, this is how I proceeded, as each photograph be it of a cave or a carving has its own GPS coordinates attached, but the level of resolution of the GPS coordinates is mostly insufficient to differentiate caves and carvings that are less than a couple of metres apart. At the level of analysis, caves and inscriptions/depictions are treated in separate chapters (chapters 5 and 6).

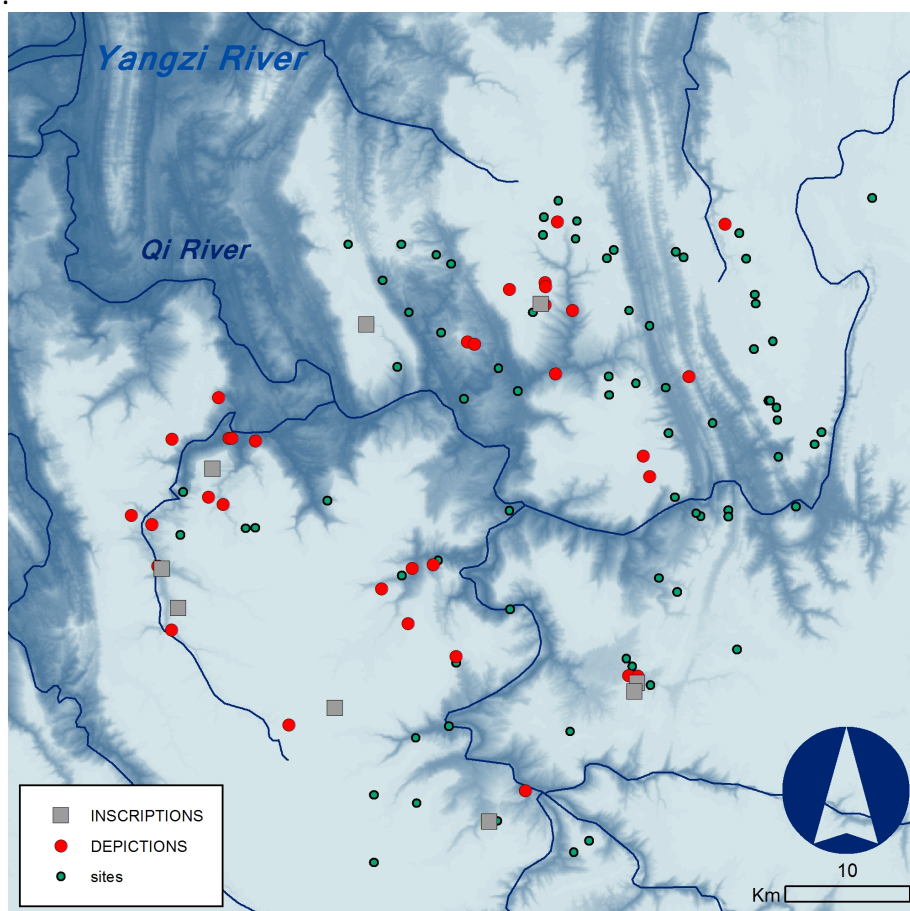
Adding a spatial dimension to my database was achieved by adding a location expressed in Lat/Long:



Spatial coordinates federate all other categories of data.

These coordinates were mostly retrieved from unpublished national survey data kept by the county-level archaeological offices as well as my own survey. When neither of these sources was available, the locations were estimated, based on the distance from nearest village to the sites, given in published Archaeological Atlas. This descriptor was used as a guide to finding the approximate location of the site on Google Earth. Sites’

locations obtained were then related to my four tables, enabling a visual rendering of the data:



Sites, inscriptions, and depictions along the Qi River.

The headings of the attribute columns for sites and caves as listed in the General Appendix are listed below:

SITES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site_ID • location (nearest village, distance) • height over ground or water (m) • total surface (m²) / length of site (m) • orientation (N,S,E,W) • total number of caves • dating • reference (1996 and/or 2009)
CAVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site_ID • cave_ID • door_measurements (w x h, number of layers) • cave_measurements (l x w x h) • groundplan (square, rectangular, L, T, trapezoid) • annex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ type (side/back wall niche, antechamber, trench, tunnel) ○ measurements (l x w x h) • ceiling (vault, barrel vault, flat, triangular, pyramidal) • coffin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ number ○ type (stone, rock-cut, decorated) ○ measurements (l x w x h)

Headings of the attribute columns for 562 sites and 579 caves as listed in the General Appendix.

The column present in each following table, which enables us to bridge the data, is the site_ID, and when such information is available, the cave_ID. These unique identifiers were composed as following: 1st letter of province + 1st letter of county + pinyin initials of site name + cave number. For example, the Chaoyang site in Qijiang County, Chongqing City, corresponds to the site_ID: C-Q-cy. Cave No.1 in the Chaoyang site corresponds to the cave_ID: C-Q-cy-1.

Not all inscriptions and depictions can be related to a specific cave. In fact, the bulk of the inscriptions/depictions treated here are not located inside the caves, but carved outdoors, on the cliff in between caves. Therefore, I made separate tables for inscriptions and for depictions, relating them to site_ID and mentioning the cave only when the two belong together. Inscriptions provide a more precise date that cannot be applied to the whole site, and sometimes not even to a single cave. Moreover, the table for inscription combines fixed descriptive terms with textual fields containing transcriptions, translations and commentaries:

INSCRIPTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site_ID • cave_ID (when clearly associated). • location of the inscription • size (surface, no. of characters, number of columns) • content • converted calendar date • translation • notes • illustration (photo, rubbing, line drawing) • reference
--------------	--

Headings of the attribute columns for 49 inscriptions, simplified for the inscriptions table in appendix to Chapter 7.

Although inscriptions are usually better documented due to the historiographical orientation of Chinese archaeology, rubbings are only available from a couple of sources due to both the remote location of the sites and the unsuitability of soft sandstone for rubbing purposes. Departing from published rubbings and textual descriptions to find the inscription *in situ*, I have added a photograph to the record. This was done not only to respond to issues of deciphering the characters due to unorthodox script or rock face weathering, or simply the highly subjective result obtained through rubbings, but also because these are a record of shapes and techniques. Known inscribed sites were all surveyed by this study and some previously unnoticed inscriptions were found.

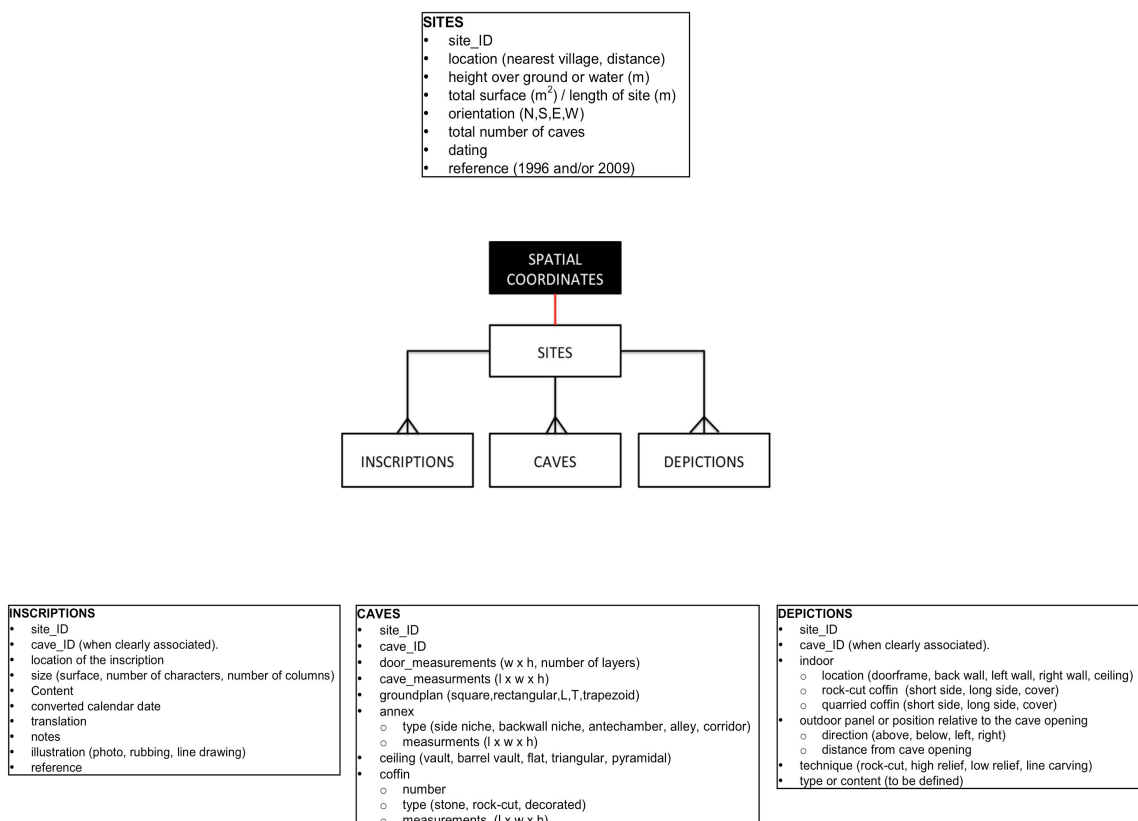
As for the depictions, their major number and variation makes the classification task more difficult, in terms of reliability of archaeological reports and of my own interpretative stands. To illustrate these questions, I have treated in detail two sites, Qigedong and Qigongzui, and identified methodological issues in the terminology used in both Cultural Relics Atlases and archaeological reports to define technique and style. A catalogue of depictions is attached in appendix to Chapter 8, with a simplified version of my record :

DEPICTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site_ID
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cave_ID (when clearly associated). • indoor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ location (doorframe, back/left/right/front wall, ceiling) ○ rock-cut coffin (short side, long side, cover) ○ quarried coffin (short side, long side, cover) • outdoor panel or position relative to the cave opening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - direction (above, below, left, right) - distance from cave opening • technique (rock-cut, high relief, low relief, line carving) • type or content
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Headings of the attribute columns for 51 depictions, simplified for the depictions catalogue in appendix to Chapter 8.

The overall structure of my database can be visualized as follows:

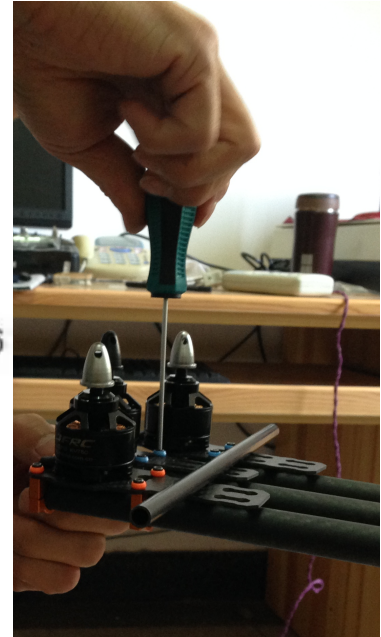
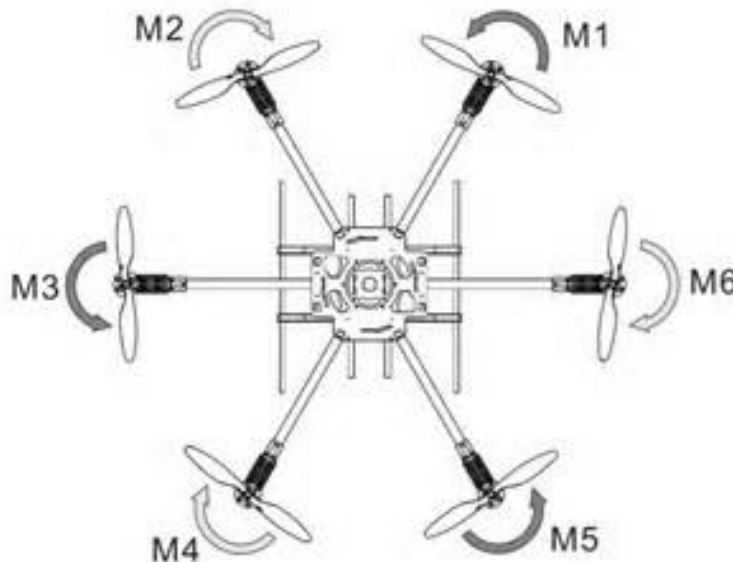


11.2.4. Drone/aerial photography

Technical issues during data collection were the opportunity to look for innovative methods of recording unmoveable heritage, although these are not used as such in the present thesis.

Drone 1, assembled with the help of Dr Liu Jianguo, CASS Archaeology, was a hexacopter in carbon fibre structure, with 2 legs, 6 arms and a platform. 1 main controller in the centre of the platform was connected to 6 speed controllers, themselves connected to 6 Da Jiang rotors, in alternate order, through the arms' carbon tubes. On the extremities of these arms came the propellers. One FUTABA receiver was connected to the main controller, and to a remote camera trigger cable.

The main controller was connected to a versatile unit, itself connected to a NAZA GPS module controlling the position of the drone. The battery was fixed under the main platform with an adhesive net, under which came the camera, placed in a carved block of sponge and equipped with a remote trigger connected to the main controller (**Fig.3.5**). A Sony 3000 camera with a wide-angle lens was secured on the hexacopter, which had a 10 minutes flying autonomy, pointing downwards. 500 sq.m. tiles were then assembled with the help of bicolour boards placed on the field as points of reference. No monitor allowed me to visually control the reach of my camera, and the orthogonal views obtained did not render the relief of the canyon-like valleys.



Drone 1. Source: courtesy of Liu Jianguo, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

In the third stage of survey, a Phantom 4 drone produced by the brand Dajiang was used. The Phantom 4 is a quadcopter, which means less resistance to strong winds, but this is not a major problem for the weather in Southwest China. In compensation, it is equipped with a built-in stabilizer and anti-shock device (detecting approaching obstacles), which revealed extremely useful in the densely-forested riversides where cliff cemeteries are located. The drone's flying autonomy is of about 30 minutes, and it can be controlled in a 5km wide range. Information such as the height, speed and position of the drone is available at all times, allowing one to control the flight more efficiently, but also to gain immediate knowledge on the surroundings of the rock-cut cemeteries and to keep a record of the drone's itinerary. Several other options add security to the flight, including a tablet or phone connected to the controller, which serves as a monitoring screen. The built-in camera can be oriented to face the front of the drone whilst flying, allowing one to select views and capture vertical surfaces. For reasons detailed in subsection 3.4.3 below however, aerial photography was revealed to be less adequate for the purpose of this research than the telescopic mast.

11.2.5. Sources, their Biases and Reliability

Source	Site location	Photographic evidence	Typology and Measurements	Inscriptions and Depictions	Reliability
Archaeological Atlases previous to 2002 (ex: Chongqing 1996)	Only distance to nearest village and orientation are provided. As a general rules for antiquities in China, the exact location of sites is not delivered in published material to protect the sites from looting. Detailed terrain maps are also illegal for matters of public security.	None	Typology, the presence of recessed doors and measurements for one cave per site (the best preserved and the easiest to access) are provided. Typology is arbitrary, inconsistent in-between different provinces or even counties (because produced by different local archaeological offices), and incomplete.	Inscriptions and their date are mentioned but no full transcript is given. Depictions are listed but the descriptive terms used are vague and arbitrary.	The atlases are based on the 1 st National survey data, but they only provide a part of the information contained in the 1 st National survey.
2002-2007 Archaeological Atlases	No GPS location is provided. As a general rules for antiquities in China, the exact location of sites is not delivered in published material to protect the sites from looting. Detailed terrain maps are also illegal for matters of public security.	None	Typology, the presence of recessed doors and measurements for one cave per site (the best preserved and the easiest to access) are provided. Typology is arbitrary, inconsistent in-between different provinces or even counties (because produced by different local archaeological offices) but also with previous recensions, and incomplete. The lack of measurements in fact means that we can only be sure that one cave has been entered, so that no typological information is available for the other caves.	Inscriptions and their date are mentioned but no full transcript is given. Depictions are listed but the descriptive terms used are vague and arbitrary.	The atlases are based on the 1 st and 2 nd National survey data, but they only provide a part of the information contained in the 2 nd National survey. Moreover, as they present all the archaeological heritage of a determined administrative region in a same format, sites are often inadequately described.

Source	Site location	Photographic evidence	Typology and Measurements	Inscriptions and Depictions	Reliability
3 rd National survey unpublished data 2009	One to three GPS locations are provided per site. Contour maps are provided for the immediate environment of the site, but they remain very fragmentary. As a general rule for antiquities in China, the exact location of sites is not delivered in published material to protect the sites from looting. Detailed terrain maps are also illegal for matters of public security. However, as these are unmoveable heritage that contain no artefacts, and generally considered as "heritage without value", local authorities have been more laxist on providing the sites' locations.	Between one and five photographs are attached to each site, mainly of the cave openings from afar and near distance. However, the quality of the images is very low, in terms of focus, resolution, light, angle. The harsh flash used flattens all reliefs. Inscriptions and depictions are not photographed. Scaled line drawings of the cliff including all known cave openings and one groundplan for one cave per site are provided.	Typology and the presence of recessed doors for all known caves per site is given, Measurements for one cave per site are provided. My own survey has shown that not all caves are known in each site. This is mainly due to the vegetation and difficulties in accessing some high-placed caves.	A full transcript of known inscriptions is given. Depictions are listed but the descriptive terms used are vague and arbitrary.	In the national survey archive, each site corresponds to a form with blank spaces for map, location, size of site, description, illustrations. No specific space is devoted to measurements, inscriptions or depictions, which all go into the general description. Most of the descriptions repeat generic sentences about when the cave was first registered and its state of conservation, as well as its relevance or value in terms of heritage. Despite the time spent in situ by the teams who had to photograph and log the position of the caves, the result is thus quite disappointing. This is explained by the fact that the survey was led on a county-level basis, and sometimes subcontracted to local villagers.

Source	Site location	Photographic evidence	Typology and Measurements	Inscriptions and Depictions	Reliability
Collection of Reports on the Three Gorges Project 1997-2001	One to three GPS locations are provided per site. Contour maps are provided for the immediate environment of the site, but they remain very fragmentary. Neighbouring settlements and cemeteries, be they contemporaneous or from other periods, are discussed in relation to the Eastern Han caves, allowing in a diachronic perspective.	Scaled line drawings, groundplans and good quality photographs are provided for the excavated portion of the site as a whole, including all caves.	Measurements are available for all known caves per site.		The excavation work carried in the Three Gorges area was led by teams from all over China, including international collaborations. The work had to be carried in an intensive way over a short period of time given the urgency. The reports were sometimes written by authors who were not directly involved in the excavation. The result is of uneven quality.
Published Articles and books	A relative position of the site with regards to the nearest city or town is given. Contour maps are sometimes provided, but they remain very fragmentary.	Photographs, drawings and sketches are often provided, but as the publications are often quite old, the quality of the illustrations are not satisfactory.	Typology for all known caves per site is given, Measurements for all discussed caves are provided.	Photographs are almost never available for inscriptions, instead rubbings are common. The quality of rubbings, however, is very uneven and as a mode of reproduction it is highly subjective, so that several readings coexist for most of the inscriptions. Depictions are heavily commented upon but they are isolated from their context, their position on the cliff or in the cave is seldom given and dressing patterns or non-figurative designs are not taken into account.	Published reports are case studies: each site is treated in its own right, which makes any comparison difficult. Most of these reports are dated to the decades between 1980 and 2000.

Source	Site location	Photographic evidence	Typology and Measurements	Inscriptions and Depictions	Reliability
My own survey	<p>Each photograph has embedded GPS location. Locations were reached by foot (only a small minority of the sites are located near modern motorways), and the path leading to each site was recorded as well.</p> <p>The distance between sites was walked when vegetation and hydrography allowed it. For the Qinxi River, for example, the valley was fully walked and several isolated caves found in-between known sites.</p>	<p>Adequate lights</p> <p>Telescopic mast</p> <p>Photographic database</p> <p>Photogrammetry</p>	<p>All caves are visited in each surveyed site and measurements taken for each. Typology is understood as broad variations within the whole dataset of surveyed sites, across several provinces and counties.</p> <p>An experiment in replicating a cave was led to reconsider typological categories from the point of view of production.</p>	<p>Inscriptions were deciphered in situ. While some of the inscriptions have deteriorated since their first publication in the 80s, most of them are clearly readable with adequate light.</p> <p>Each inscription/depiction was photographed. Rubbings were taken when the hardness of the stone allowed it, more as a way to understand the limitations of this technique.</p>	<p>The extent of my survey is limited to the 63 surveyed sites.</p>

11.3. Appendix to Chapter 6: Qi River dataset

Sources:

- Atlas Chongqing 1996: 38-52.
- Atlas Chongqing 2009(Vol.no.2): 195-230.
- National Archaeological Survey 2009 (3rd). Qijiang district Cultural Relics Office 2009.

11.3.1. 121 known sites in the Qi River

Site name	northings	eastings	elevation	river	Distance To water	orientation	Total Surface (in m2)	Number of caves
Baishulin	28.90338889	106.4429722	449	Qinxi River	60		24	3
Beibing	28.83943333	106.7785472		Qinxi River				2
Bodaoling	29.12836111	106.586	235	Bodaoling artificial lake	100	N-S	300	24
Changshibao	0	106.7172222	409			E-W	1.44	1
Chaoyang	28.89438889	106.8058333	445	artificial lake	150	N-S	62	5
Chenjiawan	29.08780556	106.6800278	330	artificial lake	100	E-W	200	4
Chenshan	29.16663889	106.7076389	922				30	7
Chuandong	29.0655	106.8872417		artificial lake			1800	30
Cuijiabian	29.08319444	106.5873611	763			E-W	100	3
Dadengzi	28.99986111	106.5038861					6000	10
Daokaimen	28.83047222	106.7818056	494	Zhenxi River	20	S-N	5000	3
Dapingzhai	29.09761111	106.7143056	745			E-W	300	5
Dashibao	0	0						1
Dashibao	29.01123056	106.8875778		Pu River			800	3
Dawan	0	0					250	7
Dingshan	28.70094444	106.5877222	884	lake dingshan			25	7
Dongzhe	29.04108333	106.7503056	305	Dongzi River	20	N-S	12	4
Dujiashan	29.10225	106.7178611	695	dayan ditch	10	N-S	4500	5

Site name	northings	eastings	elevation	river	Distance To water	orientation	Total Surface (in m2)	Number of caves
Erdengyan	29.10958333	106.7200556	708			W-E	120	10
Erlangxia	28.94914444	106.9007333		Pu River			450	10
Fengxianggou	28.98027778	106.8056389	587	Fengxiang ditch	10	W-E	6.75	2
Fulin	0	0		Fulin River	50		100	8
Fumachi	29.07225556	106.6533889					250	2
Gaokanzi	0	0					360	28
Gaozui	29.00275	106.4873333	286	Qinxi River	15	E-W	500	3
Guanyinyan	29.10247222	106.7021944	755			S-N	45	8
Haihuisi	29.04111111	106.7752778	552				150	2
Heba A	0	0					150	3
Heba B	28.94083333	106.8007222	240	Pu River	100	N-S	20	2
Hexiangyan	29.10175	106.6673889	709				18	4
Houwan	28.99530556	106.699	240	Qijiang River	15		100	1
Houwanyan	28.70541944	106.7436056				E-W	450	3
Huadianzui	28.89413889	106.6043889	465	Yuliang River Huadianzuihe ditch	200	S-N	63	2
Huangjiagou	29.02075	106.8869278					120	6
Huanglabing	29.14491667	106.7352778	556			N-S	30	6
Huanglangbian	28.82022222	106.796		lake				2
Huangniwan	29.09941667	106.7724444	672				20	2
Huawan	29.14908333	106.7161111	789				54	5
Hudouwan	28.87225	106.6969444	310	Middle Qi River			3.33	1
Jiepai	29.05427778	106.7670556	795				1500	47
Jigongshi	29.07	106.6614722	479			W-E	40	2
Jinlanba	28.98486944	106.8882361					450	10
Kaishanba	28.99652778	106.4839167	227	Qinxi River	30	E-W	50	5
Laodongyan	28.92652778	106.4374444	426	Qinxi River	100	E-W	300	9
Laofangzi	29.13758333	106.61675	536			W-E	5000	7

Site name	northings	eastings	elevation	river	Distance To water	orientation	Total Surface (in m2)	Number of caves
Lexingguanyin	29.16994444	106.7294444					200	8
Lijiaosheng	28.94133333	106.8010278	255	Pu River	150	N-S	1.7	1
Lijiauwu	29.00075	106.7971389	626			N-S	300	2
Lijigou	28.84586111	106.8582694						2
Lishugang	28.90158333	106.4745556	720			N-S	35	1
Liujiazui	28.93725	106.4898611	657			W-E	1400	9
Longdongzi	29.03402778	106.8383333	254	Pu River	100	W-E	400	3
Longtanggang	29.11880556	106.8799722	833				50	5
Longzui	29.14675	106.8543889	838			E-W	15000	21
Majiapo	29.03102778	106.658	239	Tonghui River	50	E-W	600	3
Miaogang	28.84419444	106.6536944	679	artificial lake	100	W-E		1
Miaoziding	29.03938889	106.8120278	428	Pu River		E-W	200	4
Miaozidong	29.10677778	106.7875278	359			W-E	380	5
Modanqiao A	29.11666667	106.6561944	312			E-W	500	8
Modanqiao B	0	0				E-W	200	9
Muduhe	28.93658333	106.7010556	241	Middle Qi River			500	2
Mutiyan	28.89305	106.6155222		Yuliang River				1
Poshiyan	28.95422222	106.4867778	447				4000	5
Puzi	28.88966667	106.802	528	Qiaoxihe ditch	200		60	7
Qiaogou	28.77377778	106.62375	373			S-N	15	3
Qiaoshang	29.08493333	106.6187556					300	4
Qigongdong	29.13525	106.8139167	529			E-W	300	9
Qigongzui	29.06941667	106.6651944	428	Pu River			160	10
Qigongzuib	29.13961111	106.8119167	590	Pu River		E-W	112	7
Qikongdong	29.14136111	106.8603889	923			N-S	320	9
Qikongzi	0	0		Fulin River	50		140	10
Qikongzi B	28.72052778	106.6334444	402				48	2

Site name	northings	eastings	elevation	river	Distance To water	orientation	Total Surface (in m2)	Number of caves
Qikongzi Heba	28.93530556	106.4327778	460	Qinxi River	1	W-E	2400	18
Qinlongshan	28.83897222	106.5874444	893			NW-SE	12	1
Qiufaqikongzi	28.74561111	106.5996111	888	Qinxi River		W-E	1500	13
Rongyan	28.97986111	106.7933333	659	Shanchajinghe ditch	250	N-S	7500	15
Sanjiao	28.86852778	106.44725	482	Qinxi River	60		1.32	1
Sanpengwan	29.04836944	106.73085				N-S	120	7
Sanzhen	28.79086111	106.5426389	352	Middle Qi River		S-N	12.32	3
Shanbishui	29.00455556	106.486	235			W-E	200	2
Shangbang	28.72096667	106.628225						1
Shangbangou	29.00888889	106.7318611	406	Qijiang River	150	SE-NW	5	1
Shanguangcang	28.79133333	106.5348806					120	3
Shatai	28.90863889	106.62425	411	Yuliang River			150	2
Shatuwan	29.02741667	106.7000833	288			N-S	50	8
Shengrenkong	29.10986111	106.6946944	864				12	2
Shidaguai	28.91347222	106.6356389	304	Yuliang River	100		45	2
Shifo	28.69202222	106.5962194					750	7
Shihutou	28.82888889	106.7819444	520	Zhenxi River	50		5000	18
Shijiazui	29.12905556	106.5844722	528			E-W	3.3	1
Shilangan	29.12602778	106.7692806					150	13
Shitizi	28.98408333	106.7971111	580	artificial lake	200	W-E	25000	6
Shuanghetang	28.83888889	106.5729444	610	Yuliang River	5	W-E	10	1
Shuanglongwan	29.14447222	106.71675	799				150	6
Shuangzhengqzui	29.0505	106.7263889	231				18	3
Sijiaoshan	29.09844444	106.7154722	733			座西向东	31	13
Siwan	28.84421389	106.6572333					2000	3
Songlingang	28.79986111	106.7495556	530	Shilaoluohu ditch	30	NW-SE	5000	11
Taigongpu	28.69977778	106.7336389	399			E-W	300	11

Site name	northings	eastings	elevation	river	Distance To water	orientation	Total Surface (in m2)	Number of caves
Taishang	29.02741667	106.7000833	288			E-W	10	2
Tianqiao	28.79594444	106.7379444	552			N-S	1000	7
Tonggengzi	28.88283333	106.4470556	661	Qinxi River	20		32.5	3
Tongyajiyingou	29.05466667	106.7672778	351	Jinyi sitch		W-E	150	7
Tuanyuhe	28.74577778	106.6621389	403			N-S	1	1
Wangjiaba	28.98813889	106.4420833	588			W-E	2.7	1
Wangjiawan A	28.93747222	106.5016389	443			E-W		1
Wangjiawan B	28.99850833	106.9195611					100	9
Weizigang	29.03427778	106.8055556	358			E-W	60	5
Xiabang	29.10202222	106.8712278					40	4
Xiandongbian	29.06273333	106.8681528					40	6
Xianfeng	29.15113889	106.7481694					600	23
Xianligang	28.87161111	106.6313889	620			N-S		1
Xiaobianhe	28.95475556	106.8126056		Pu River			80	3
Xiaojiazui	28.95491667	106.4861667	505	Wantanzi River	30	E-W	6	2
Xinliangqiao	28.83127778	106.7820556	477	Zhenxi River	50		10000	80
Xinnongzhuang	29.00926389	106.8407889					75	3
Xinqing	28.90282222	106.4447389					600	18
Xinwoyan	29.08863889	106.736	398	artificial lake	0		30000	12
Xinzhuang	28.94332778	106.4223194					600	18
Yakou	28.99105	106.9136083					80	8
Yanfengou	28.96469444	106.4815	505				75	5
Yangtianpang	28.96477778	106.4511111	545			S-N	115	10
Yanshang	29.14013889	106.8604722	851				220	6
Yanzui	29.096925	106.8742444						2
Yaoguanchang	29.08863889	106.8130556	492			E-W	125	11
Yazitang	29.10802778	106.6061389	313				250	8

Site name	northings	eastings	elevation	river	Distance To water	orientation	Total Surface (in m2)	Number of caves
Youfanggou	29.02485833	106.8829361					1000	9
Yuanshiba	29.07942222	106.7955556						1
Yulianghe	28.90955556	106.6364167	314			N-S	12	1
Zhuanfanglaodongyan	28.92583333	106.43725	439	Qinxi river		E-W	70	4
Zongshuwan	29.135	106.6414444	480			N-S	10	2

11.3.2. 34 dated caves

Site	number of caves	cave	date	door layers	script content	inscription location	Door exterior width	Door exterior height	Door interior width	Door int. height	cave length	cave width	cave height	cave volume	ceiling shape	cave type and annex
Baishulin	3	3	165	3	延熹八年四月十二七日 口口公口口用廿八大 口口口口口口口口 独自作以十月十日口口	right of door					1.85	2.1	1.28	4.9728	triangular	single volume
Baishulin	3	na	175	3	熹平						2.5	1	1.02	2.55	triangular	single volume
Baishulin	3	2	184	2	光和六年三月十二日口 口口作石	right of door					2.3	1.45	1.3	4.3355	triangular	annex
Baishulin	3	1	210	2	建安十五年二月十日口 元盛葬	top of door	1.2	1.05	0.73	0.8	2.3	0.8	0.91	1.6744	triangular	single volume
Changgu	3	3	159	2	延熹二年二月廿七日	left of door	0.83	1.1			2.3	2.1	1.5	7.245	vault	single volume

Site	number of caves	cave	date	door layers	script content	inscription location	Door exterior width	Door exterior height	Door interior width	Door int. height	cave length	cave width	cave height	cave volume	ceiling shape	cave type and annex
Changgo u	3	1	160	1	延熹三年八月廿日口安	above door	1.7	1.4			0.8	1.7	1.4	1.904	flat	niche
Changgo u	3	2	188	2	中平四年十二月廿四日李画封	right of door	0.71	1			2.15	1.47	1.2	3.7926	vault	single volume
Chuijiaoba			201		建安六年八月一日(...)									0		
Daokaime n	3	2	122	2	延光元年十一月十五日，王子羊□.....□宗作石冢，百姓明知也	left of door					1.9	2.2	1.45	6.061	vault	single volume
Dongsanz hai	2	1	175	1	na									0	flat	single volume
Guanzhu angkou	5	2	175	1	熹	above door								0	flat	single volume
Guanzhu angkou	5	1	184	2	光和六年	around door								0	flat	single volume
Leipishi	13	n a	133	1	阳嘉二年王肺作□四万	above door					1.61	1.27	0.94	1.9220 18	flat	single volume
Qigedong	8	4	122- 125	3	延光口年口月十一日作口用宜子口万世恩		1.6	1.54	0.9	1.0 4	2.94	2.46	1.6	11.571 84	vault	coffin
Qigedong	8	1	172	3	熹平元年十月二十五口作此冢宜子口		1.32	1.32	0.68	0.8 9	2.35	1.75	1.63	6.7033 75	vault	single volume
Qigedong	8	1	175	3	熹平		1.32	1.32	0.68	0.8 9	2.35	1.75	1.63	6.7033 75	vault	single volume
Qigedong	8	2 or 5	178	3	熹平七年十月二日易子口口口		1.41	1.32	0.75	0.9	2.94	1.92	1.71	9.6526 08	vault	single volume

Site	number of caves	cave	date	door layers	script content	inscription location	Door exterior width	Door exterior height	Door interior width	Door int. height	cave length	cave width	cave height	cave volume	ceiling shape	cave type and annex
Shijiasha n	17	9	165	3	延熹八年四月十二日口 康公斯口口共 (和) 大 敦庄口康為子作冢口作 平口百口口口	right doorfra me	1.36	1.26	0.75	0.8 8	2.1	2.55	1.4	7.497	vault	annex
Shikan	5	n a	165	2										0		coffin
Shuanghe tang	2	1	181	2	光和四年七月卅日七度 資多石	left of door	1.2	1.23	0.73	0.9 3	2.4	2.2	1.35	7.128	flat	single volume
Shuanghe tang	2	2	181		七月口口作	right of door	0.88							0		
Songlinga ng	11	n a	215	2	建安二十年口口口杜伯 周口五子		1.35	1.24	1	1	2.5	2.6	1.4	9.1	vault	single volume
Yanfengg ou	4	3	106	3	延平元口.....禾口山口 直仁十.....						2.8	1.85	1.4	7.252	triangu lar	single volume

11.3.3. Measurements for 36 doorframes with 2 layers

Site	cave	door exterior width	door interior width	doorframe 1 depth	door exterior height	door interior height	doorframe 2 depth	number of layers	door of door
Qigongzui	7	0.9	0.79	0.11	1.1	0.95	0.15	2	
Jigongshi	1	1.07	0.95	0.12	1.14	1.04	0.1	2	

Site	cave	door exterior width	door interior width	doorframe 1 depth	door exterior height	door interior height	doorframe 2 depth	number of layers
Longzui	1	0.9	0.74	0.16	1.1	1.08	0.02	2
Zongshuwan	1	1.1	0.9	0.2	1.2	1	0.2	2
Shangguancang	2	1.1	0.9	0.2	1.1	0.9	0.2	2
Weizigang	4	1.17	0.95	0.22	0.9	0.77	0.13	2
Majiapo	1	1.1	0.86	0.24	1.9	0.9	1	2
Gaozui	1	1.06	0.8	0.26	1.15	0.85	0.3	2
Jiepai	24	1	0.72	0.28	0.98	0.71	0.27	2
Fengxianggou	2	2.3	2	0.3	0.9	0.7	0.2	2
Shanbishui	1	1.2	0.9	0.3	1.3	1.1	0.2	2
Sanpengwan	1	1.2	0.9	0.3	1.1	0.9	0.2	2
Xinwoyan	7	1.2	0.9	0.3	1.2	0.9	0.3	2
Siwan	2	1.25	0.95	0.3	1.2	1.1	0.1	2
Shidaguai	1	1.1	0.8	0.3	1.2	0.9	0.3	2
Miaozidong	2	1.3	1	0.3	1.15	0.9	0.25	2
Changshibao	na	1.2	0.87	0.33	1.2	0.9	0.3	2
Dadengzi	8	1.23	0.88	0.35	1.47	1.1	0.37	2
Songlingang	1	1.35	1	0.35	1.24	1	0.24	2
Shidaguai	2	1.1	0.75	0.35	1.1	0.93	0.17	2
Fengxianggou	1	1.2	0.8	0.4	1.3	0.9	0.4	2
Yaoguanchang	5	1.2	0.8	0.4	na	0.87	na	2
Qigongdong	1	1.3	0.9	0.4	1.3	1	0.3	2
Shijiazui	na	1.3	0.9	0.4	1.1	0.7	0.4	2
Qikongzi heba	11	1.2	0.73	0.47	1.2	0.9	0.3	2
Baishulin	1	1.2	0.73	0.47	1.05	0.8	0.25	2

Site	cave	door exterior width	door interior width	door frame depth	door exterior height	door interior height	door frame depth	number of layers
Tianqiao	3	1.35	0.86	0.49	1.35	1	0.35	2
Xiaojiazui	2	1.2	0.7	0.5	1.25	0.85	0.4	2
Qinlongshan	na	1.08	na	na	1.53	1.33	0.2	2
Shanbishui	2	na	1	na	na	1	na	2
Fumachi	1	na	0.84	na	na	0.85	na	2
Sanjiao	na	na	0.75	na	na	0.82	na	2
Shangbangou	na	1.16	na	na	1.2	na	na	2
Heba A	na	1.2	na	na	1.05	na	na	2
Taizishang	1	1.2	na	na	1.05	na	na	2
Houwan	1	1.3	na	na	1.2	na	na	2
Qikongdongb	8	na	0.82	na	na	0.75	na	2

11.3.4. Measurements of 17 doorframes with 3 layers

Site	cave	door exterior width	door exterior height	second layer width	second layer height	door interior width	door interior height	number of layers
Guanyinyan	3	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.72	3
Dujiashan	1	1.1	1.2	1	0.9	0.9	0.8	3
Shitizi	1	1.4	1.05	1.17	0.9	0.89	0.69	3
Dapingzhai	4	1.15	1.5	0.95	1	0.7	0.9	3
Rongyan	12	1	1.22	0.8	1	0.62	0.85	3
Hexiangyan	1	1.1	1.3	0.8	1	0.6	0.7	3
Qikongzi heba	2	1.43	1.56	0.98	1.02	0.78	0.95	3

Site	cave	door exterior width	door exterior height	second layer width	second layer height	door interior width	door interior height	number of layers
Shuanghetang	1	1.2	1.23	0.98	1.03	0.73	0.93	3
Shatai	1	1.18	1.25	0.9	1.03	0.7	0.9	3
Wangjiawan A	na	1.1	1.25	1	1.05	0.9	0.95	3
Sijiaohan	10	1.26	1.36	1.04	1.06	0.88	0.75	3
Jigongshi	2	1.1	1.29	0.88	1.09	0.76	0.95	3
Erdengyan	1	1.35	1.25	1	1.1	0.8	1	3
Yulianghe		1.25	1.54	1	1.15	0.77	1	3
Cuijiabian	2	1.1	1.5	1	1.3	0.9	1.2	3
Lijiawu	1	1.45	1.65	1.2	1.5	0.85	1.2	3

11.3.5. Measurements for 9 doorframes with 4 layers

Site	cave	door exterior width	door exterior height	third layer width	third layer height	second layer width	second layer height	door interior width	door interior height	number of layers
Lishugang	1									4
Yangtianpang	4									4
Xianligang	1	1.27	1.3					0.6	0.67	4
Wangjiawan B	na									4
Tonggengzi	1	1.84	1.79					1.08	1.27	4
Shangbang	na									4
Rongyan	13	0.95	1.2					0.64	0.83	4
Qikongzi B	1									4
Lishugang	1	1.11	0.96	0.95	0.93			0.8	0.81	4
Jiepai	na									4

11.4. Appendix to Chapter 7: Inscriptions table


I have excluded a number of columns from the original table (location and format of the inscription) to fit the format of this paper. They can be matched through site_ID to the General Table for all sites and all caves. All inscriptions are divided in a TABLE A (Inscriptions south of the Yangzi) and TABLE B (Inscriptions outside of the study area).



The editions used to study the inscriptions are noted in the Bibliography as *Ciyuan*, *Hanyu da cidian* and for major sources editions are given from the Scripta Sinica Database. <http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihp/hanji.htm> (last accessed on 20 march 2014). Other references in the 'author name + date format' are found in the Bibliography.

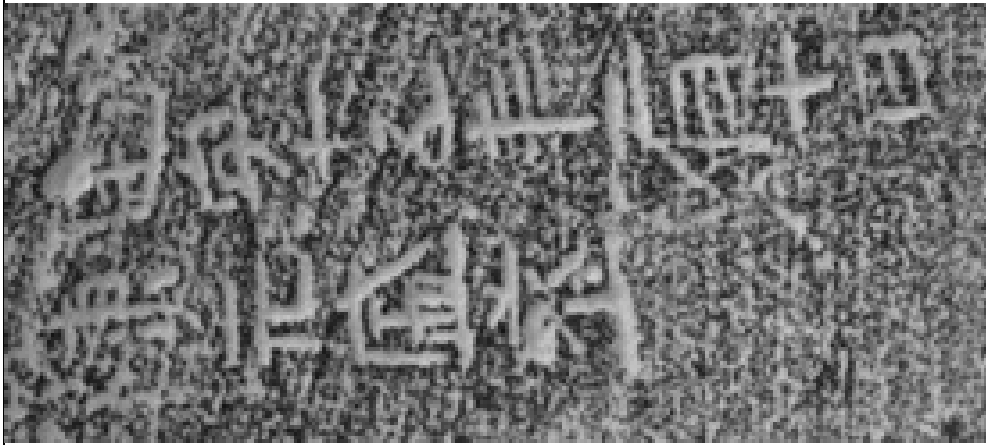
The generic structure of a Type 2 inscription looks like the following:

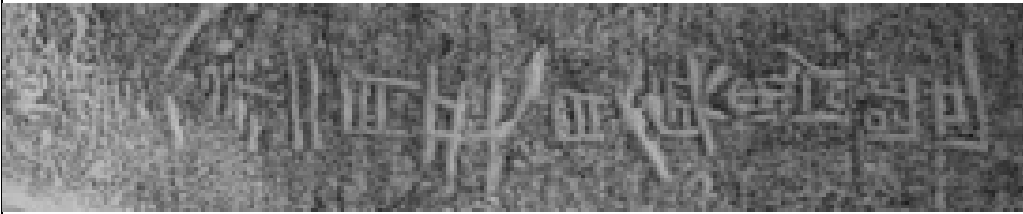
Date (era + number + year + number + month + number + day) + Name (patron) + Title + preposition (for 為) + Name (recipient or deceased) + verb expressing the act of making (作, 穿) + demonstrative pronoun (此) + Term designating the Cave (冢, 葬, 墓, 石) + Number + classifier + verb expressing the value (直) + price.
--


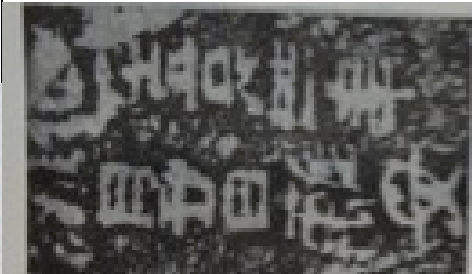
11.4.1. Table A: Inscriptions south of the Yangzi


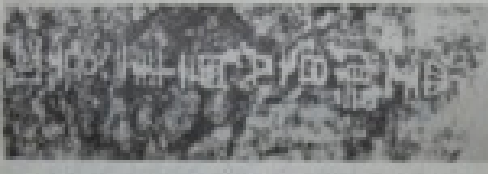
N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
1	Baishulin	C-Q- bsl-0	183	光和六年四月十二日口口為夫作石 具書楊	In the 6th year of the Guanghe era, on the 12th day of the 4th month, (...) made a stone [cave] for her husband. Written by Yang.	具書. Meaning of 'scribe' in <i>Zuozhuan xu</i> 左傳序: 直書其事, 具文見意. 具文 entry in <i>Ciyuan</i> 1979:316. Ma Wei reads 光和六年三月十二日口口為作石. Gao Wen reads 永和六年四月十二日祭為夫作石. I kept the 光和 era, replaced 四月 by 三月, excluded the 祭 character, inserted a 口 after it and read 為夫 as a compound. The two unreadable characters seem to stand for the patron's name.	Gao Wen 1990:34. Rubbing from Ma Wei 2012: fig.3. Photograph by author.	


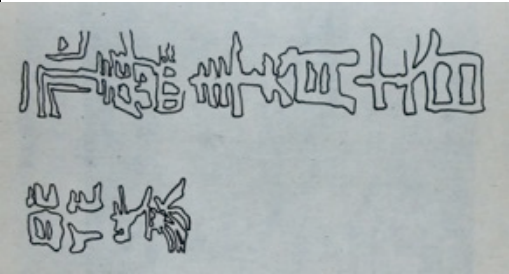
N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
2	Baishulin	C-Q- bsl		...八年二月 十二日...	In the eight year of (...), on the 12th day of the 2nd month (...).		Atlas Chongqing 1996:39- no.137. Photograph by author 2010.	
3	Baishulin	C-Q- bsl-2	172- 178	喜平	Xiping era		Atlas Chongqing 1996:39- no.137; Ma Wei 2012:fig.6. Rubbing by author 2011.	

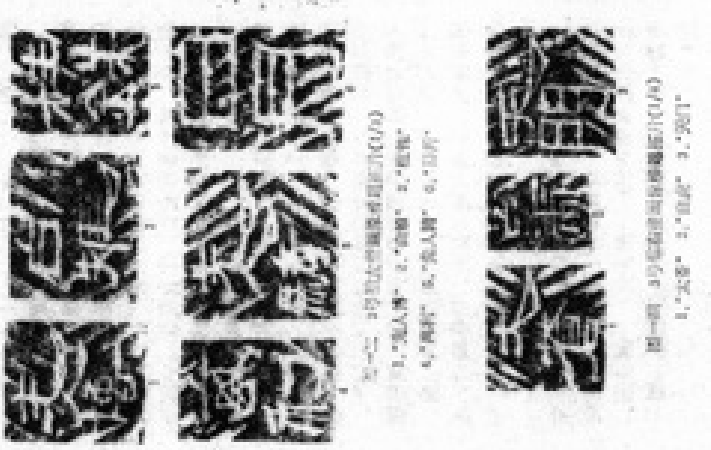
N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
4	Baishulin	C-Q- bsl-3	210	建安十五年 二月十日陳 元盛葬	In the 15th year of the Jian'an era, on the 10th day of the 2nd month, Chen Yuansheng was buried (here).	陈元盛 is a name? 葬 can be a name (burial) or a verb.	Atlas Chongqing 1996:39- no.137; Ma Wei 2012:fig.4; Gao Wen 1990:34. Rubbing by author 2011.	

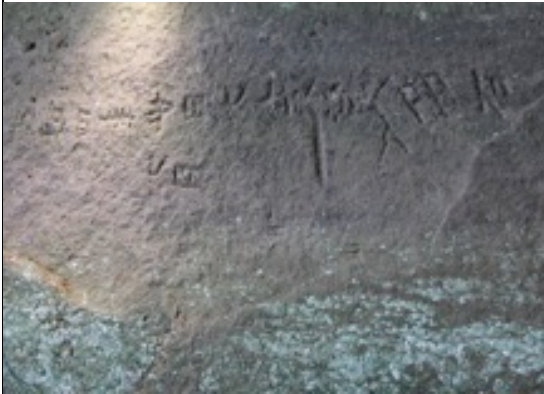

N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
5	Baishulin	C-Q-bsl-2	165	延熹八年四月廿七日口口 口同口世	In the 8th year of the Yanxi era, on the 27th day of the 4th month,(...).	Ma Wei reads: 延熹八年四月廿七日口口口口. I see five characters after the date, among which a 同 and 世 character.	Xie Ling 2000:19. Rubbing from Ma Wei 2012: fig.5.	



N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
6	Baishulin	C-Q-bsl	165	延熹八年四月十二日 公口口口口口 用廿八大口 口口口口口 為子口口口 自作以十月 十日口口口	In the 8th year of the Yanxi era, on the 12th day of the 4th month, the honourable (...) used 28 big (...) for his son (...), to make 'on his own', on the 10th day of the 10th month.	自作: Litt. 'on his own'. With his own hands? Could be an expression of sorrow/effort? Possibly two dates separated by 6 months, a beginning and an end for the cave's making process? This cave was inscribed indoors, thus after completion of the cave.	Rubbing from Gao Wen 1990:27.	
7	Changgou	C-J-cg	159	延熹二年二月廿七日	In the 2nd year of the Yanxi era, on the 27th day of the 2nd month (...).		Rubbing from Gao Wen 1990:26.	

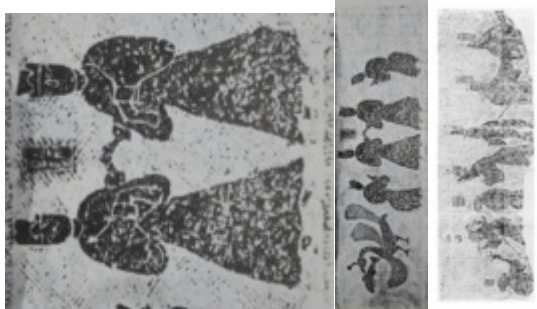
N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
8	Changgou	C-J-cg	188	中平四年十月廿四日 李画封	In the 4th year of the Zhongping era, on the 24th day of the 12th month, Li Hua sealed [this cave].	李画 is a name. 封. In the <i>Shisan jing</i> juan 12:235-1, appears in the context of 'sealing a tomb' (封葬) by piling dirt on top of the burial: 庶人懸封葬不為雨止不封不樹. In our case, this cannot be the case, since the tomb is not buried under a tumulus, but excavated from a cliff. Could refer to the act of sealing a tomb with a door. This detail is of great importance, since the overwhelming majority of the caves lack a door, or any trace of a sealing device.	Rubbing from Gao Wen 1990:26.	
9	Changgou	C-J-cg	160	延熹三年八月廿日口安	In the 3rd year of the Yanxi era on the 20th day of the 8th month, (...).		Rubbing from Gao Wen 1990:26.	



N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
10	Chujiaoba	C-Q-cjb?	201	建安六年八月一日(...)	In the 6th year of the Jian'an era, on the 1st day of the 8th month, (...)		Xie Ling 2000:19; Ma Ziyun 1993:73. Rubbing from Ma Wei 2012:fig.7.	
11	Gongxueyuan	C-Jb-gxy	158	永壽四年六月十七日昭作此塚	In the 4th year of the Yongshou era, on the 17th day of the 6th month, Zhao made this tomb.	昭 is a name. 塚. In <i>Shuowen jiezi</i> 說文解字, stands for a high tumulus: 塚, 高墳也. from 塚 entry in <i>Ciyuan</i> 1979:322.	Line drawing by Gao Wen 1990:24.	
12	Gongxueyuan	C-Jb-gxy	173	熹平二年十月十八日造此塚	In the 2nd year of the Xiping era, in the 18th day of the 10th month, this cave was constructed.		Gao Wen 1990:29	



N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
13	Guishan	S-N		白虎/ 天門/ 太倉 / 先人 博/ 先人騎/ 日月/ 柱銖/ 白雉/ 高利/ 伏羲 / 女娃/ 玄武	White Tiger/Heavenly Gate/Great Granary/Immortal Is playing Liubo/Immortal Riders/Sun and Moon/???/???/ ???/???/???/ Fuxi/Nuwa/Da rk Warrior.	<p>Most iconographic readings of pictorial stones in Sichuan are based on the Guitoushan inscribed coffin.</p> <p>先 is read as 仙. In Schuessler 2007:122, 仙 is presented as a late word. In earlier occurrences of the word xiān, the original graph for xiān is 僊, conveying the idea of lightness or ascension. The graph 僊 was probably replaced for graphical reasons. Indeed, the other graphic variant of xiān is 仝, which associates it with mountains, similarly to 仙.</p> <p>先 does not appear as a variant for 仙 in textual sources, but they were phonetically close back in Later Han times. In Schuessler 2007:527, the proposed reconstruction of later Han phonetics shows that both 先 sen and 仙 sian start with the initial consonant s- and end with the final consonant -n, the vowels being different. In Middle Chinese, the 先 sien gets closer to 仙 sjān. The appearance of *i and *j belongs to a wider development from Old to Middle Chinese (they are absent from both 先 *sen and 仙 *san/*sen in Old Minimal Chinese).</p> <p>伏羲: 希 is read as 羲</p> <p>Given that several characters are written in another graphy, this phonetical proximity could be applied to 伏羲 written as 伏羲 as well?</p>	Rubbings from Xie Ling 2000:23.	 <p>Figure 1-12: Rubbing of a pictorial stone inscription from the Guitoushan. The figure shows several instances of the character '仙' (xiān) in different forms. The caption below the rubbing reads: 仙 一 二 三 四 五 六 七 八 九 十 十一 十二 十三 十四 十五 十六 十七 十八 十九 二十 二十一 二十二 二十三 二十四 二十五 二十六 二十七 二十八 二十九 三十 三十一 三十二 三十三 三十四 三十五 三十六 三十七 三十八 三十九 四十 四十一 四十二 四十三 四十四 四十五 四十六 四十七 四十八 四十九 五十 五十一 五十二 五十三 五十四 五十五 五十六 五十七 五十八 五十九 六十 六十一 六十二 六十三 六十四 六十五 六十六 六十七 六十八 六十九 七十 七十一 七十二 七十三 七十四 七十五 七十六 七十七 七十八 七十九 八十 八十一 八十二 八十三 八十四 八十五 八十六 八十七 八十八 八十九 九十 九十一 九十二 九十三 九十四 九十五 九十六 九十七 九十八 九十九 一百. The rubbing shows the character '仙' in various forms, including the original form 僊 and the variant 仝.</p>

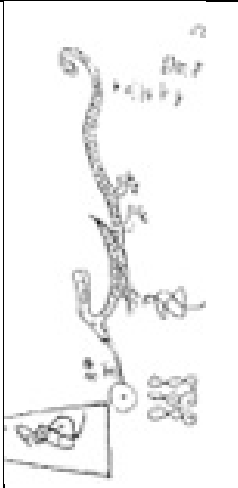
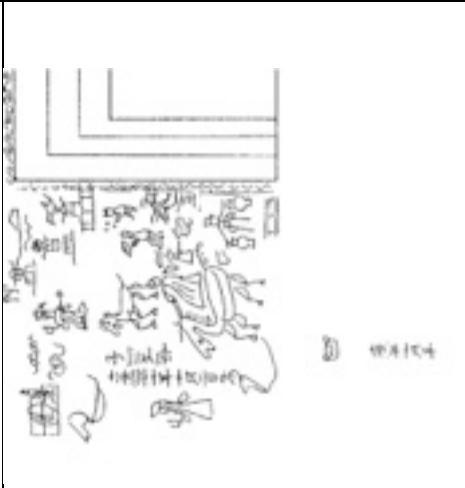
N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
14	Guofu	C-Q-gf-1	181	光和四年七月卅日七度資多石	In the 4th year of the Guanghe era, on the 30th day of the 7th month, in qidu, [[I] paid for a big amount of stone.	<p>七度: designates a specific position of the stars.</p> <p>In the <i>Hanshu</i> calendar juan 21:1449, it is used as a reference for changes in season: 中箕七度, 小雪.</p> <p>In the <i>Hanshu</i> juan 27:2075, also found in a month+day+七度 succession: 六年七月辛亥晦, 日有食之, 在軫七度.</p> <p>The expression also appears repeatedly in the <i>Hou Hanshu</i> calendar juan 30.</p> <p>資: riches (財), here more likely to act as a verb (to buy) with 多 石 as an object expressing quantity.</p>	Photograph by author 2012.	
15	Guofu	C-Q-gf-2		七月口口作	On the 7th month, (...) made [this cave].		Photograph by author 2012.	

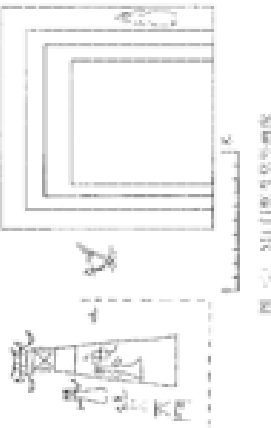
N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
16	Hejiang	S-H	101	文聖妃／永元十三年二月二十一日／葬子男伯惠記	Wen Shengfei, in the 13th year of the Yongyuan era, on the 21st day of the 2nd month, records that she buried her son Bo Hui.	文聖妃 is a name. given the type of burial, it is unlikely that 妃 refers to any title.	Photograph by author 2013.	
17	Hejiang	S-H		李翁君石開萬年	Stone door of Sir Li Weng. Ten thousand years.	<p>開。</p> <p>In the <i>Hou Hanshu</i> juan 14:1576, designates close-by doors: 順與光武同裡開。</p> <p>In the <i>Shuowen</i>, it is defined as an inner door: 開, 闔也。</p> <p>As other meanings, the <i>Hanyu da cidian</i> gives 'to close': 古同'閉'.</p> <p>In the <i>Quan Tangwen</i> juan 597, 開 is used to express protection against thieves: 乃作水門 (...)以閉寇偷。</p>	<p>Rubbing from Gao Wen 2011:349.</p>	<p>stone slab</p> 

N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
18	Hejiang	S-H		東海太守資 中李少君	Li Shaojun from Zizhong, Governor of Donghai Commandery.	<p>東海太守。 The full expression appears as an independent cartouche on another stone coffin (rock-cut, not quarried) excavated in Xinjin, Sichuan Province, among 6 other cartouches : 老子, 孔子, 曾子, 汝誦, 神農, 郎麥少君, 東海太守. See Gao Wen 2011 : 413.</p> <p>In the <i>Shiji</i>, <i>Hanshu</i> and <i>Hou Hanshu</i>, the expression designates a real title, Governor of 東海 Commandery, being located in today's Jiangsu Province (faraway from Sichuan).</p> <p>It is unlikely that both the Xinjin and the Hejiang deceased were once Governors of Donghai Commandery. The fact that in Xinjin, the title appears among Laozi, Confucius, Zengzi, Luyong(?), Shennong, suggests that it might designate a mythical function, or that the deceased wished to place himself in a mythical lineage.</p> <p>I didn't find any reference to 郎麥少君.</p> <p>In the <i>Shiji</i> juan 12:458, 李少君 appears as the figure of a magician who encounters immortals and counselor of Han Wudi on those matters.</p> <p>Possibly, both 'Name+Shaojun' do not refer to the deceased.</p> <p>However, there is a reference to real life administrative geography: 資中, still designates Zizhong County in today's Sichuan Province. Together with the former Han'an county (漢安縣) and the Niupi county (牛鞞縣) along the navigable Tuo River (沱江),</p>	<p>Rubbing from Gao Wen 1990:68.</p>	 <p>The titles are written above the figures</p>

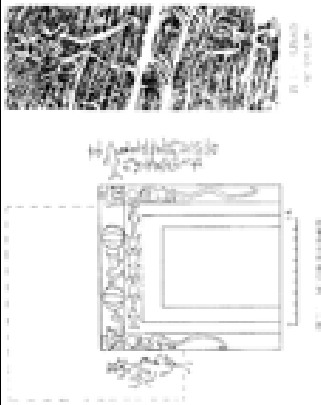

N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
19	Jiangbei	C-Jb-	178	光和元年	First year of the Guanghe era.	Gao Wen 1990:30		
20	Jinsha			此塚直二萬五	This tomb is worth 25000 cash.	Gao Wen 2011:400		
21	Leipishi	C-N-lps	133	陽嘉二年王師作墓四萬	In the 2nd year of the Yangxi era, Master Wang made this tomb [worth] 40000 cash.		Rubbing from Gao Wen 1990:17. Photograph by author.	
22	Luzhou		165	延熹八年閏五月葬口口口口口	In the 8th year of the Yanxi era, on the 5th month, (...) was buried (...).	閏. Extra month in a bissextile year: 6 june 165 AD.	Rubbing from Gao Wen 2011:323.	

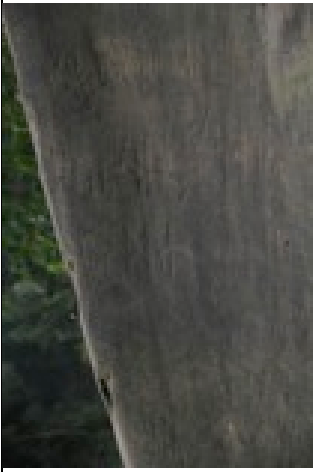

N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
23	Qige dong	S-Y-C-qgd	172	熹平元年十月廿口(日)作此塚宜子孫	In the 1st year of the Xiping era, on the 20th day of the 10th month, [I] made this tomb to benefit my descendents.		Photograph by author.	
24	Qige dong	S-Y-C-qgd		門+見+姿			Photograph by author.	
25	Qige dong	S-Y-C-qgd	172-178	熹平	Xiping era			
26	Qige dong	S-Y-C-qgd	178	熹平七年四月口	In the 7th year of the Xiping era, on the 4th month, (...)			

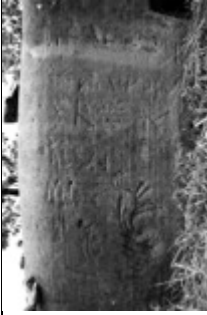


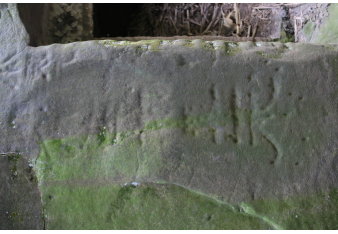

N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
27	Qige dong	S-Y-C-qgd		神玉	Sacred Jade	神玉。 In the <i>Zhouli</i> 周歷, it is presented as a ritual object: 故知旦明雲玉幣所以禮 神玉 (<i>Shisan jing</i> 2: 26-1). In the <i>Liji</i> 禮記, its comes from Mount Kunlun: 崔氏雲用大裘為崑崙之神玉 (<i>Shisan jing</i> 25:480-1).	Line drawing by Luo Erhu 2001:19.	
28	Qige dong	S-Y-C-qgd	178	熹平七年十月二日易子口口口	In the 7th year of the Xiping era, on the 2nd day of the 10th month, (...).	易子. Literally 'Change son'. In case of famine, people exchange their sons so that they do not eat their own child. 圍宋五月, 城中食盡, 易子而食, 析骨而炊 (<i>Shiji</i> juan 40: 2001). Unlikely that a family would bury another's son. Possibly a phonetic equivalent for 宜子[孫]?	Line drawing by Luo Erhu 2005:279.	
29	Qige dong	S-Y-C-qgd	172-178	熹	Xi[ping era].		Luo Erhu 2005:280.	
30	Qige dong	S-Y-C-qgd	172-8	熹平十年月年	Xiping era, on the 10th month, in the (...) year.	十年年 There are less than 10 years in the Xiping era, + can only refer to the month. Incomplete inscription or error ? Placed below A29: 熹平七年十月二日易子口口口。	Luo Erhu 2005:280.	

N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
31	Qige dong	S-Y-C-qgd	172-178	延光口年 口月十一 日作塚用 宜子孫萬 世恩	In the (...) year of the Yanguang era, on the 11th day of the (...) month, [I] made this tomb to be used for the benefit my descendants. Might this benefit last through the ages.	用. Does not appear in other cases (作塚用). 天門. Heavenly Gate. From 天門 entry in the <i>Ciyuan</i> 1979:687: Earliest occurrence in the <i>Chuci</i> 楚辭屈原九歌 大司命: 黃開兮天門 紛吾承兮玄雲 and <i>Huainanzi</i> 淮南子: 排闥闔 鑰天門. In commentaries, recurrent analogy: 闔闔, 天門也. In the <i>Shiji</i> juan 40:2331, astrological treatise (天官書), it stands for a constellation's name. ex: 角、天門, 十月為四月, 十一月為五月, 十二月為六月, 水發, 近三尺, 遠五尺. In the <i>Hanshu</i> juan 22:1066, part of songs for the jiao rite, it stands for a step in celestial travels:	Niu Tianwei 2010:11.	
32	Qige dong	S-Y-C-qgd		士/趙是(氏)天門	Sir/Heavenly Gate of the Zhao family.	天門. Heavenly Gate. From 天門 entry in the <i>Ciyuan</i> 1979:687: Earliest occurrence in the <i>Chuci</i> 楚辭屈原九歌 大司命: 黃開兮天門 紛吾承兮玄雲 and <i>Huainanzi</i> 淮南子: 排闥闔 鑰天門. In commentaries, recurrent analogy: 闔闔, 天門也. In the <i>Shiji</i> juan 40:2331, astrological treatise (天官書), it stands for a constellation's name. ex: 角、天門, 十月為四月, 十一月為五月, 十二月為六月, 水發, 近三尺, 遠五尺. In the <i>Hanshu</i> juan 22:1066, part of songs for the jiao rite, it stands for a step in celestial travels:	Line drawing by Luo Erhu 2001:19.	


[illegible]



N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
33	Qige dong	S-Y-C-qgd		有口口氏			Luo Erhu 2005:289.	
34	Qige dong	S-Y-C-qgd		李/黃是(氏)作此塚一門夏究苦知者為我直不知者奴	Dame Huang from the Li family made this single tomb, Xia Jiuku (?) the others recognize their own awareness, only I am left unaware.	李/黃是(氏). If we read 氏, possibly a woman previously named Huang, who entered the Li family. 夏究苦: ?. In the <i>Hanshu</i> juan 72:3817, we find the pair 知者/不知者 with 智: 今世俗謂不智者為能, 謂不智者為不能. 奴: two possibilities. Either servant/slave like in Pixian stele and Taliangzi inscription, or the woman designating herself? Expression of sorrow?	Line drawing and rubbing by Luo Erhu 2005:293.	
35	Qige dong	S-Y-C-qgd		李	Li	李: name.	Luo Erhu 2005:293.	
36	Qikongzi	C-Q-qkz	139	永和四年二月	In the 4th year of the Yonghe era, on the 2nd month		Atlas Chongqing 1996:39-no.135. Rubbing from Gao Wen 1990:21. Photograph by author.	
37	Qikongzi	C-Q-qkz	176	熹平五年口月	In the 5th year of the Xiping era, on the (...) month		Atlas Chongqing 1996:39-no.135.	


N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
38	Qikongzi	C-Q-qkz	196-220	建安石口口口	Jian'an era (...)		Atlas Chongqing 1996:39-no.135.	
39	Qigongzi	C-Q-qkz	181	光和四年三月二日平路元立作塚直(二)萬五千	In the 4th year of the Guanghe era, in the 2nd day of the 3rd month, Ping Luyuan erected this tomb worth 25000 cash.		Gao Wen 1990:33; Atlas Chongqing 1996:40-no.138; Ma Wei 2012:fig.1. Photograph by author	
40	Qigongzi	C-Q-qkz		二年口口口石來到探是口石口交口式口上五五實	In the 2nd year of the (...) era, (...).		Rubbing by author.	

N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
41	Qigou ngzui	C-Q- qkz		(...)章.			Ma Wei 2012:fig.2. Photograph by author	
42	Shihou tou	C-Q- sht	122	延光元年十一月十五日壬子 ／羊蒼口 閔宗作石 塚百姓明 知也(...).	In the 1st year of the Yanguang era, on the 15th day of the 11th month, on renzi, Yang Cang (...) Min Zong to make a stone tomb so that common people would see it.	壬子: stem-branch combination designates a time of the day, from 11pm to 1 am. Is it possible that they start to work in the middle of the night, or more probably time of death? 羊蒼: name. 閔宗: name. Four more inscriptions : ? 日佳伏 泰元之 楊倉記為郭師口作口群 口口口口月十五日	Atlas Chongqing 1996:38- no.134. Rubbing from Gao Wen 1990:16. Photographs by author.	   





N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
43	Shijia shan	C-Q-sjs	165	延熹八年四月十二日口康公斯口軍共(和)大敦庄趙康為子作塚口作平口百口口口	In the 8th year of the Yanxi era on the 12th day of the 4th month, (...) Zhaokang from Dadun village made a tomb for his son (...).	公 is not intended here as 'duke', but rather as 'honourable', a term expressing respect, used alone or as a suffix attached to a surname, comparable to <i>jun</i> 君. From entry no.3388 in Hucker 1985. 軍共 (和):?	Atlas Chongqing 1996:39-no.136.	
44	Song ingan g	C-Q-slg	215	建安二十年口口口杜伯周口五子	In the 20th year of the Jian'an era, Du Bozhou (...) his fifth son.	杜伯周: name.	Atlas Chongqing 1996:40-no.139.	
45	Tong geng zi	C-Q-tgz		三口口口口口符友命立用市	(...) Fuyou ordered to erect to buy?	符友: name? 立用: decide to use, like in the <i>Zhoushu</i> 周書 12: 蓋立用 大中則陰順時為休大之。 市: to buy, in the <i>Kangxi Cidian</i> (in <i>Da Song chongxiu guangyun</i> 大宋重修廣韻): 買也。	Atlas Chongqing 1996:40-no.140. Photograph by author 2015.	

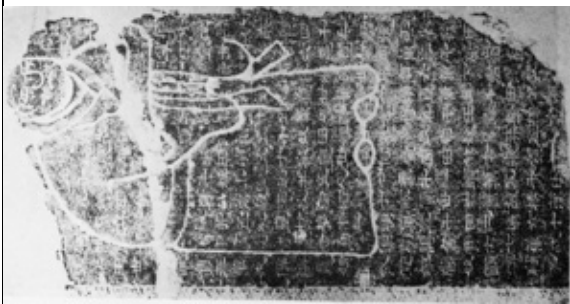
N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
46	Sanchahe	Y-X-sch	223	章武三年七月十日姚立從曹意買大父曹孝梁右一門七十萬畢知者廖誠社六塋姚胡及母	In the 3rd year of the Zhangwu era, on the 10th day of the 7th month, Yaoli bought from Caoyi's father Cao Xiaoliang, this door on the left for 70,000 cash. Liao Cheng and Duliu witnessed the transaction. Yaohu and his mother were buried.	姚立 Yaoli: name. 曹意 Caoyi: name. 曾孝梁 Cao Xiaoliang: name. 畢: completed (transaction). 知者: witness? Those who know? 廖誠 Liao Cheng: name. 社六 Du Liu: name. 姚胡 Yao Hu: name. Also discussed in Chen Xuan 2015 :36 (the site is referred to as Tongbankou).	Huang Siting 1986:68; Mao Yuanming 2008; Zhou Beinan 2013:94-96. Photograph by author 2015 (courtesy of Xishui county archaeological office).	
47	Sanchahe	Y-X-sch		麥孟京婁石	Stone Building of Mai Mengjing/ or Tomb of Mai Mengjing's wife/or/ Mai Mengjing Lou You.	麥孟京. 婁: Mao Yuanming reads it as a 婁. Zhou Beinan reads 婁 as 鑊, carving, from Kangxi Cidian: 又鑊刻貌.	Huang Siting 1986:68; Mao Yuanming 2008; Zhou Beinan 2013:94-96. Photograph by author 2015 (courtesy of Xishui county archaeological office).	

N	Site	Site ID	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
48	Yanfe nggo u	C-Q- yfg	106	延平元口 (...)禾齋山 口直仁十 (...)	In the 1st year of the Yanping era, (...) He Shaishar (...) worth 20000 (...).		Atlas Chongqing 1996:38- no.133.	
49	Yanfe nggo u	C-Q- yfg		宋元有甘立 六子	Song Yuanyou (...) sixth son (...).	宋元有: name. 甘:	Atlas Chongqing 1996:38- no.133.	
50	Wum acun	C-B- wmc					Photograph by author 2015.	

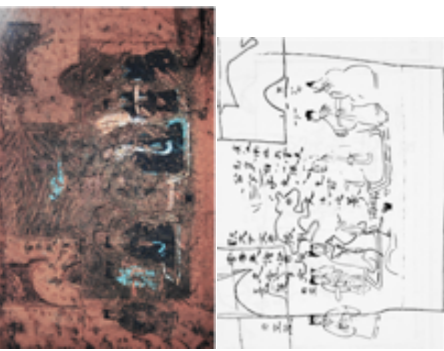
11.4.2. Table B: Inscriptions outside the study area

N	Site	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
1	Guanyind ong	161	延熹三年十二月二十 一日陳夫人葬吉子	In the 3rd year of the Yanxi era, on the 21st day of the 12nd month, Chen's spouse buried her beloved son.		Photograph by author 2013.	


N	Site	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
2	Jiangkou		維兮本造此穿者張賓 公妻子偉伯伯妻孫陵 在此右方曲內中	Alas, [], wife of sir Zhang Bin, made this hole. The tomb of [Zhang Bin's] son Weibo, his son's wife, and his grandson lie in this space.	方曲：designates a space? 曲尺：carpenter's square. 方尺：	Tang Changshou u 1993:80.	
3	Jiangkou	77	維兮張偉伯子長仲以 建初二年六月十三日 與少子叔元俱下世長 子元益為之祖父穿中 造內樓柱作崖棺葬父 及弟叔元	Ah ! Chang Zhong, son of Zhang Weibo, in the 2 nd year of the Jianchu era, on the 13th day of the 6th month, with the youngest son Shuyuan all died. Yuanyi, son of Chang, for the benefit of his father, made an pillar in this chamber, and made a 'cliff coffin', to bury his father and his younger brother Shu Yuan.	少子：youngest son. 俱：都 樓柱：refers to wooden architecture, here transferred to stone carving.	Tang Changshou u 1993:80.	
4	Longwangdong	135	陽嘉四年三月造作延年石室	In the 4th year of the Yangxi era, on the 3rd month, [] made this stone chamber to prolonge [my] years.	延年石室：translated as 'life-prolonging stone chamber' by Wu Hung. However, this may as well be a generic propitiatory term designating the tomb, like the 'ten thousand years residence' (萬歲之宅) expression. Wu Hung relates it to the secluded 'quiet chambers' (<i>jingshi</i> 靜室) in use under patriarch Zhang Lu (active 191-216 CE), where the sick withdrew to reflect upon their faults (<i>si guo</i> 思過), or for the purpose of 'watching for the others' (<i>houqi</i> 候氣). See Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133-92) in his treatise <i>Lüli</i> 律曆, later included in the <i>Hou Hanshu</i> . Cited in Espeset 2009:30.	Rubbing from Gao Wen 1990:19.	


N	Site	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
5	Lushan	211	故上計史王暉伯昭以建安十六歲在辛卯九月下旬卒其十七年六月甲戌葬鳴呼哀哉	The deceased official Wang Hui, zi Bo Zhao, on the 16th year of the Jian'an era, a xunmao year, towards the end of the 9th month, passed away. In the 17th year, on the jiaxu day of the 6th month, he was buried. Alas!	上計吏: functionary who submits an accounting (to the throne). (entry no.585 in Hucker 1985). Amount of time between the time of death and the time of burial: 9 months.	Gao Wen 1990:74-75.	
6	Lushan	205	建安十年三月上旬造石工劉盛息燥書	In the 10th year of the Jian'an era, in the beginning of the 3rd month, the stone mason Liu Sheng carved this, Xi Zao wrote it.		Gao Wen 1990:70-73.	
7	Pixian		萬八千。田八畝，質四千。上君遷王岑鞠田。。。牛一，舍六區，直四十四萬三千。屬叔長。。。田三十畝，質六萬。下君遷故(...)五人直二十萬；牛一頭直萬五千；田口頃(...)五畝買口十五萬；康眇樓舍，質五千。王奉堅樓舍(...)王岑田口口，直口萬五千；奴田，婢田，奴多，奴白，奴鼠，並五人(...)田頃五十畝，直三十萬。何廣周田八十畝，田八口口，質八萬。		On stone slab. Referred to as the 'Broken Stele of Wang Xiaoyuan' (王孝淵殘碑). This was a non-funerary stele later reconverted into a tomb door.	Rubbing from Gao Wen 1990:14-15.	

					故王汶田，頃九十畝，賈三十一萬。故楊漢(...)奴立，奴口，口鼠，並五人，直二十萬；牛一頭，萬五千；田二頃六十(...)田頃三十畝，口口口萬；中亭后樓，賈四萬。蘇伯翔謁舍，賈十七萬。張王田三十口畝，質三萬；奴俾，奴意，奴最，奴宜，奴營，奴調，奴利並		

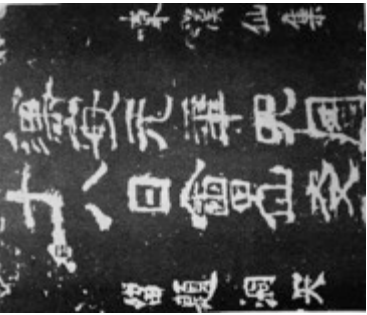


N	Site	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
8	Qinsheng	76	建初元年十月造	Made in the 1st year of the Jianchu era, on the 10th month.		Tang Changshou 1993:80.	
9	Qinsheng	118	元初五年十一月二十七日楊得採藏	In the 5th year of the Yuanchu era, on the 27th day of the 11st month, Yang Decai was buried.	楊得采: name? 藏: might stand as homophone for 葬.	Tang Changshou 1993:80.	
10	Shiziwan	158-160	延熹一年造三年七月成	Made in the 1st year of the Yanxi era, finished on the 7th month of the 3rd year.	造/成: beginning and end of the excavation process.	Tang Changshou 1993:79.	
11	Taliangzi		先祖南陽尉口口 / 土鄉長口裡漢太鴻臚/ 口文君子賓/ 子賓子中黃門侍郎/ 文君真坐與詔/ 外親內親相檢厲見/ 怨口口諸上顛諸/ 口口口口口絕肌則/ 骨當口口(口)父即/ 鴻臚擁十萬眾/ 平羌有功赦死/ 西徒處/ 此州郡縣鄉卒	His ancestor being Commandant of Nanyang (...), Lord Wen Zibin is Chamberlain for Dependencies. Zibin's son, the Gentleman Attendant Lord Wen Zhen, was ordered to push external and internal members of the imperial lineage to accuse each other, he was involved in these accusation and was hated (...). Because his father was Chamberlain, and possessed 100,000 men, and could subdue a Qiang rebellion, Wen Zhen was spare from the death penalty, he was instead exiled towards the West, he arrived here, settled and died.	尉: common military title, sometimes honorific, not always suggesting active field command. (entry no.7657, p 564 in Hucker 1985) 鄉長: provincial leader?. 太鴻臚: Chamberlain for Dependencies, supervising the reception of princes (wang) and marquises (hou) at the capital and imperial audiences in general, as well as diplomatic relation with non-chinese leaders. (entry no.5947 in Hucker 1985) 侍郎: Attendant Gentleman (entry no.5278 in Hucker 1985). Zhao Ruimin reads 中黃門侍郎 as one title. 坐與詔: 檢厲: criticize/accuse. 赦死:	Zhao Ruiming 2009:84. Photograph and Line Drawing from Taliangzi 2008.	



N	Site	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
12	Taliangz i		廣(漢)□守丞瓦曹吏創 農諸□掾□□子女□生 □□□□□□□□此墓	Zheng Wan, Governor of Guanghan Commandery/Official Chuang Nong(...)/(...)/(...)this tomb.	丞: aide. 曹 and 吏 are both fragments of known titles. I translate them broadly as 'official'. 創農: name? again, the construction /諸□掾□□子/ 太守: Governor of the territorial unit of administration called a Commandery. In Han times, also Grand Protector, a title commonly awarded chieftains of south-western aboriginal tribes. (entry no.6221 in Hucker 1985) 掾史: In Han times, Administrator of a clerical section (cao), of low rank or unranked (entry no.8238 in Hucker 1985). 諸書: In the <i>Hanyu dacidian</i> , from the <i>Shiji</i> (魏其武安侯列傳): 應劭曰: '諸書 , 諸子文書也'. (Pei Yin Commentary 裴駰集解: 蚡辯有口; 學《樂孟》諸書, 王太后賢之). 堂: name? 元長生: name?	Zhao Ruiming 2009:84.	
13	Taliangz i		蜀太守文魯掾縣官舊 夫諸書掾史堂子元長 生	Wen Luyuan, Governor of the Shu Commandery/County officer Qiang Fu/Yuan Changsheng, son of the Administrator Tang.		Zhao Ruiming 2009:84.	The titles are written above the figures, in ink.
14	Taliangz i		司空/ 司空佐	Capital Construction Officer/Left Officer for Capital Construction	司空: Capital Construction Office, two of them, prefixed left and right, each headed by a director (<i>ling</i> 令) (entry no.5687 in Hucker 1985).	Zhao Ruiming 2009:84.	The titles are written above the figures, in ink.
15	Taliangz i		荊子安字聖應主/ 應婦/ 侍奴/ 從奴/ 從小	Wenjin's son An, zi Sheng Yin was responsible [for building this cave]/Sheng Yin' wife/follower servant/common servant/external servant	奴: not slave, but different types of servants: 侍奴/從奴/從小	Zhao Ruiming 2009:84.	The titles are written above the figures, in ink.

N	Site	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
16	Taliangzi		襄人	Xiang People	<p>襄: possibly referring to the Xiang prefecture in today Hubei province 古州名/故治今湖北襄陽 (襄 entry in the <i>Hanyu da cidian</i>).</p> <p>Huo Wei identifies the row of dancing to the 眩人 or 幻人 cited in the <i>Shiji</i>. In <i>Shiji</i>, the returning Han ambassador brings back foreign 'Xuan' people from Daniaoluan and Lixuanshan. 漢使還，而後發使隨漢使來觀漢廣大，以大鳥卵及黎軒善眩人 (Shiji 123: 4198).</p> <p>襄 xiāng in Schuessler 2007:532, is cross-referenced to <i>ràng</i> 讓 in Schuessler 2007:439.</p> <p>The Rang are cited alongside the Mang, the Di, the Si, the Qiong and the Bo (all appearing in different graphies throughout historical texts) in occasions such as the failed embassies attempted by Emperor Han Wudi 漢武帝 between 120 and 125 BCE, after Zhang Qian 張騫 had suggested a route to Bactria (<i>Da Xia</i> 大夏) through the region (Hervouet 1964:128). Rang tribes are mentioned in Ba for the Western Han period in the Huayang guozhi (1984, Juan 1, page 28; and in Liu Lin's note page 30). We can do little more than place their name somewhere in the area along all the other tribes' names.</p>		

N	Site	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
17	Xiaoba	136	果／永和一年三月一日陳賈德物故作此塚建三男墓內左右口穴不口想口	In the 1st year of the Yonghe era, on the 1st day of the 3rd month, Chen Maide passed away. Her 3rd son made this tomb, and buried her (...)	陳賈德: name. 物故: to die 死亡。 From the <i>Sunzi</i> : 則不能不有疾病物故之變焉 (物故 entry in the <i>Hanyu da cidian</i>) Gao Wen reads: 永和一年三月一日陳賈德物故作此塚口口口口左右口穴口口相思	Rubbing in Gao Wen 1990:20	
18	Xiaoba	159	延熹二年三月十日佐孟機為子男乃造此塚端行九丈左右有四穴口入八尺當口由川世中出	In the 2nd year of the Yanxi era, on the 10th day of the 3rd month, Zuo Mengji made this tomb for his son. [it is] wide 9 <i>zhang</i> , with 4 chambers, a corridor of 8 <i>chi</i> , (...)	由川世中出: ?	Rubbing and line drawing from Gao Wen 1990:25	

<p> 庚子年三月三日 十日午時發 陽色發時家鄉行 九次左右清國使 八次清國使 </p>	

N	Site	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
19	Xiaoyao shan	142	漢安元年四月十八日 會仙友	In the 1st year of the Han'an era, on the 18th day of the 4th month, [the deceased] met with the friendly immortals.	會仙友: another way to say 'passed away'.	Rubbing from Gao Wen 1990:22	
20	Xindu	128	永建三年八月段仲孟 造萬歲之宅刻勒石門 以示子孫	In the 3rd year of the Yongjian era, on the 8th month, Duan Zhongmeng built this 'eternal residency', he carved this stone door, to show his descendents.	萬歲之宅	Rubbing from Gao Wen 2011:148	 slab.
21	Xindu	138	段仲孟年八十一以永和三年八月物故	Duan Zhongmeng passed away at the age of 81, in the 3rd year of the Yonghe era, on the 8th month.	物故	Gao Wen 2011:148	 stone slab.

N	Site	year	content	translation	notes	reference	image
22	Xinfusi	149	建和三年正月二十日 造此塚立行十丈口門 三丈川戶一丈人川戶 右方穴八尺有兩枚周 代造此塚後子孫率來	In the 3rd year of the Jianhe era, on the 20th day of the 1st month, [I] made this tomb, [it is] high 10 zhang, its door [measures] 3 zhang, its burial chamber [measures] 1 zhang, on the right of this chamber, there is an 8 chi cave, and two mei 枚. Zhou Dai made this tomb, for the use of his descendants.	(立隸): I read it as 立. 川: Chen Xuan 2015:35 reads 川 as 穿 for a chamber where the coffin was placed. 枚: classifier? Or specific term used by masons/patrons for the rock-cut spaces, as suggested by Chan Xuan 2015:35. 率來: 帶領 in the <i>Hanyu da cidian</i> . the term 'hole' xue 穴 could stand for the door, but more probably for inner spaces, since it could be read as a nei 內 character for 'indoor'.	Rubbing from Gao Wen 1990:23	
23	Maishan ji	68 BC	地節二年口月巴州民 楊量買山值錢千百作 業塚子孫永保其母替	In the 2nd year of the Dijie era, on the (...) month, a villager from Bazhou, Yang Liang, bought a mountain worth more than a thousand cash, to build his family tomb, for the eternal protection of his descendants, in the name of his mother.	業塚: family tomb?	Rubbing from Gao Wen 1990:3	
24	Zhangji a	87C E	元和四年正月三日, 南郡 歸道難裡稅少卿、少陽, 共作是三丈五塚, 舉高丈三尺, 廣丈二尺, 功二月五日乃成, 賈直錢二萬五千。師神都裡男子袁都昔六人, 當此之米二百, 當作塚之離, 造有世塚百。少卿		A 87 CE inscription in Zhangjia cemetery reported by He Shiwei 2011:110. Summary: • dimensions • 25,000 cash • 33 days of work • 6 workers (specialized or experienced: 當此之米二百, 當作塚之離, 造有世塚百) • transmitting it to the next age, so		

		食六人，少陽食六人，傳后世，諸子孫能讀此文皆聖人。孔子事禮，大子事神。子路屈元有武毋文，致央死時，頭頸別處。少陽手書，沮灘裡眾孝仲。		that sons and grandsons can read it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shao Yang wrote this, crying and lamenting pious and faithful son among the many. 		
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11.5. Appendix to Chapter 7: Depictions Table

This is a simplified version of my database of depictions located in Type 2 caves south of the Yangzi. The site name in Chinese characters, district/county and province can be matched with the corresponding entries in the General Appendix.

Site name	depictions	indoor/outdoor	location	technique	content
Baishulin	3	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	horse
Chadian	2	indoor	back wall	line carving	bracket set
Chadian	2	indoor	back wall	line carving	symbol (endless knot)
Chuandong	3	indoor	wall	relief	human figure
Chuandong	3	indoor	wall	relief	tower
Dadengzi	2	indoor	ceiling	line carving	fish
Dadengzi	2	indoor	side wall	line carving	floral
Dawan	1	indoor	ceiling	line carving	geometric pattern
Dongsanzhai	3	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	fish
Dongsanzhai	3	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	tower
Dongsanzhai	3	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	tower
Dujiashan	2	outdoor	doorframe	line carving	gutterline
Dujiashan	2	outdoor	doorframe	relief	roof tile

Site name	depictions	indoor/outdoor	location	technique	content
Erdengyan	4+	indoor	wall	line carving	coins
Erdengyan	4+	indoor	wall	low relief	dancing scene
Erdengyan	4+	indoor	wall	low relief	phoenix
Erdengyan	4+	indoor	wall	Line carving	Series of 3 fish
Gaozui	1	indoor	left wall		
Gexin	1	indoor	wall	high relief	human figure
Guankoucun	1	indoor	right wall	line carving	geometric pattern
Guanyinmiao	1	indoor	back wall	high relief	
Guanyinyan	2	outdoor	side of door		flying creatures
Guanzhuangkou	9	indoor	ceiling	line carving	coins
Guanzhuangkou	9	indoor	side wall	line carving	coins
Guanzhuangkou	9	indoor	side wall	line carving	fish
Guanzhuangkou	9	indoor	side wall	line carving	fish
Guanzhuangkou	9	indoor	side wall	line carving	fish
Guanzhuangkou	9	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	tiger
Guanzhuangkou	9	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	tower
Guanzhuangkou	9	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	tower
Guanzhuangkou	9	indoor	side wall	line carving	tower
Hongxing	4			line carving	fish
Hongxing	4			line carving	horse
Hongxing	4			line carving	tower
Huadianzui	2	indoor	ceiling, back wall		geometric pattern
Jigongshi	2	indoor and outdoor	wall	relief	tower
Jinshan	2	indoor	back wall	line carving	bird etc
Jinzhuan	4	indoor	right of door	line carving	fish
Jinzhuan	4	indoor	left of door	line carving	tower

Site name	depictions	indoor/outdoor	location	technique	content
Jinzhuan	4	indoor	right wall	line carving and low relief	horse and human figure
Jinzhuan	4	indoor	right wall	line carving	coins
Jumadong	3	outdoor	doorframe	line carving	floral
Jumadong	3	outdoor	doorframe	line carving	geometric pattern
Jumadong	3	outdoor	doorframe	line carving	gutterline
Kaishanba	1	outdoor	above door	line carving, relief, inscriptions	gutterline
Leidashi	1	outdoor	above door	line carving, relief, inscriptions	gutterline
Leifengshan	1	outdoor	doorframe	line carving	gutterline
Lianghecun	2	indoor		dressing	fishscale dressing
Lianghecun	1	indoor	walls	dressing	fishscale dressing
Lianghecun	1	indoor	walls	dressing	fishscale dressing
Lianghecun	2	outdoor	above door/walls	line carving, relief, inscriptions	gutterline
Lianghecun	1	outdoor	above door	line carving	pattern
Liangziyan	1	indoor	wall	line carving	wavy lines
Longzui	1	indoor			
Maftuo	1	indoor	wall	line carving	geometric pattern
Miaoziding	12	indoor	wall	line carving	bird and fish
Miaoziding	12	indoor	wall	line carving	crouching human figure
Miaoziding	12	indoor	wall	line carving	horse
Miaoziding	12	indoor	wall	line carving	horse and chariot
Miaoziding	12	indoor	wall	line carving	human figure leading a horse
Miaoziding	12	indoor	wall	line carving	series of 7 fish
Miaoziding	12	indoor	wall	line carving	series of circles
Miaoziding	12	indoor	wall	line carving	standing human figure with left raised arm

Site name	depictions	indoor/outdoor	location	technique	content
Miaoziding	12	outdoor	alley	line carving	standing human figure with left raised arm
Miaoziding	12	indoor	wall	line carving	storied building
Miaoziding	12	indoor	wall	line carving	sun and moon
Naiheqiao	1	indoor		rock-cut	stove
Poshiyan	2	indoor	wall	line carving	bird
Poshiyan	2	indoor	wall	line carving	fish
Qindanyan	2	indoor	wall	line carving, inscription	fish
Qindanyan	2	indoor	wall	line carving, inscription	horse
Qiaozishi	1	indoor	both side walls		
Qigongzui	4	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	animal
Qigongzui	4	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	bird
Qigongzui	4	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	human figure
Qigongzui	4	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	tower
Qikongzi	3	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	bird
Qikongzi	3	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	human figure
Qikongzi	3	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	tower
Rongyan	4	indoor	wall	line carving	fish
Rongyan	4	indoor	wall	line carving	horse
Rongyan	4	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	human figure
Sanjiao	1	indoor	right wall	line	geometric pattern
Sanpengwan	1	outdoor	above door	carving, relief, inscriptions	gutterline
Shanbishui	1	outdoor	flanking cave opening		pair of towers
Shangbangou	2	outdoor	doorframe		floral
Shangguancang	3	outdoor			bird
Shangguancang	3	indoor			geometric pattern

Site name	depictions	indoor/outdoor	location	technique	content
Shangguancang	3	outdoor			tower
Shapangshang	1				
Shatai	2	indoor	back wall		geometric pattern
Shengrenkong	1	outdoor	above door	line carving, relief, inscriptions	gutterline
Shibantan	1	indoor	left wall	line carving	huamn figure
Shihutou	9	outdoor	above door	low relief	fish
Shihutou	9	outdoor	left of cave door	line carving	half animal, half human figure
Shihutou	9	indoor	ceiling	line carving	sun and moon
Shihutou	9	indoor	back wall	line carving	human figure
Shihutou	9	outdoor	above door	high relief	bird
Shihutou	9	outdoor	left of cave door	line carving	pair of figures holding a disc
	9	outdoor	left of cave door	line carving	butterfly-like symbol (sheng)
Shijiazui	1	indoor	ceiling		geometric pattern
Shikan	5	indoor	side wall	line carving	fish
Shikan	8	indoor	side wall	line carving	fishing scene
Shikan	6	indoor	side wall	line carving	human figure
Shikan	9	indoor	side wall	line carving	hunting scene
Shikan	7	indoor	side wall	line carving	nuwa
Shitizi	1	indoor			
Shixiangzi	1	indoor	back wall	line carving	human figure
Sijiashan	4	indoor		line carving and relief	fish
Sijiashan	4	indoor		low relief	horse
Sijiashan	4	outdoor		high relief	rooftile
Sijiashan	4	outdoor		line carving and relief	tower
Siwan	1	indoor		line carving	architectural lines

Site name	depictions	indoor/outdoor	location	technique	content
Songlingang	2	indoor	back wall	line carving	geometric pattern
Songlingang	2	indoor	wall	line carving	human figure
Suobian	5	indoor	walls	line carving and dressing and relief	'moneytree'
Suobian	5	outdoor	doorframe	high relief	3D pumpkins
Suobian	5	indoor	ceiling	line carving and dressing and relief	ceiling centre
Suobian	5	indoor	side wall	line carving and dressing and relief	chariot
Suobian	5	indoor	side wall	line carving	cross
Suobian	5	indoor	side wall	line carving and dressing and relief	fish
Suobian	5	indoor	side wall	line carving and dressing and relief	fish scale dressing
Suobian	5	indoor	side wall	line carving	five coins
Suobian	5	indoor	side wall	line carving and dressing and relief	sun and moon
Tianqiao	1				
Tonggengzi	5	indoor	back wall	line carving and inscription	dougong
Tonggengzi	5	outdoor	doorframe	line carving	human figure
Tonggengzi	5	outdoor	doorframe	line carving	human figure
Tonggengzi	5	outdoor	doorframe	low relief	phoenix
Tonggengzi	5	outdoor	doorframe	low relief	phoenix
Wangjiagou				line carving	
Wumacun	2	outdoor	cliff face	line carving	2 towers
Xiandongbian	1	indoor	wall		geometric pattern
Xianligang	1	outdoor	doorframe		tower
Xiaogaodong	1	indoor	rock-cut coffin		

Site name	depictions	indoor/outdoor	location	technique	content
Xiaojiazui	1	outdoor	doorframe		geometric pattern
Xinlianqiao	1	indoor	backwall niche		geometric pattern
Xinqing	2	outdoor		line carving	human figure
Xinqing	2	outdoor		line carving	tower
Xinwoyan	3	indoor	ceiling	line carving	architectural lines
Xinwoyan	3	outdoor	side of door	line carving	floral
Xinwoyan	3	indoor	walls	line carving	geometric pattern
Xinzhuang	3	indoor	right wall	line carving	human figure
Xinzhuang	3	outdoor	side of door	line carving	tower
Yakou	1	indoor		rock-cut	stove
Yanfenggou	3	indoor and outdoor	side wall	line carving	bird
Yanfenggou	3	indoor	side wall	line carving	floral
Yanfenggou	3	indoor	side wall	line carving	geometric pattern
Yangtianpang	1	indoor		line carving	human figure
Yulianghe	1	outdoor			geometric pattern
Zhengjialiang	1	indoor	rock-cut coffin	line carving	geometric pattern

11.6. Appendix to Chapter 8: Depictions Catalogue

- 11.6.1 Frequent motifs
 - 6.1.1 Fish
 - 6.1.2 Fish and bird
 - 6.1.3 Bird
 - 6.1.4 Horse
- 11.6.2 Outliers
 - 6.2.1 Specific to the area
 - 6.2.2 Technological borrowings
 - 6.2.3 Iconographical borrowings
- 11.6.3 Human figure
 - 6.3.1 Partial
 - 6.3.2 Full
 - 6.3.3 Scenes
- 11.6.4 Indoor panel
 - 6.4.1 Figurative panel
 - 6.4.2 Coins
 - 6.4.3 Geometric patterns
- 11.6.5 Ceiling ornament
- 11.6.6 Architecture
 - 6.6.1 Tower
 - 6.6.2 Bracket set
- 11.6.7 Type 1 Antechamber
 - 6.7.1 Huangsan
- 11.6.8 Later rock-cut tomb
 - 6.8.1 Tang dynasty rock-cut burials in Hengshan

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6.1.1 Fish

- 6.1.1.1 Guangzhuangkou. 20cm w. right of door, indoor. one of a pair.
- 6.1.1.2 Jinzhuwan. 35cm w. right of door, indoor.
- 6.1.1.3 Miaoaziding. 30cm w. left wall, indoor. one of a series of seven.
- 6.1.1.4 Miaoaziding. 28cm w. left wall, indoor. one of a series of seven.
- 6.1.1.5 Qigongzui. 20cm w.outdoor.
- 6.1.1.6 Qigongzui. 25cm w. right wall, indoor.
- 6.1.1.7 Qigongzui. 25cm w. right wall, indoor.
- 6.1.1.8 Guangzhuangkou. 55cm w. right of door, indoor.

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6.1.1 Fish

6.1.1.9 Erdengyan . 40cm h. indoor. series of three.

6.1.1.10 Sanchahe. 40cm w. right wall, indoor.

6.1.2 Fish and bird

6.1.2.1 Miaoziqing. 40cm w. left wall, indoor.

6.1.2.2 Qigedong. circa 50cm w. outdoor.

6.1.2.3 Sanchahe. 80cm w. above cave opening, outdoor.

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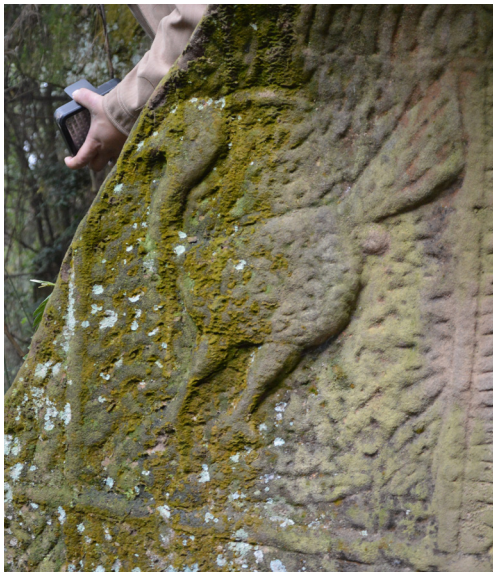
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6.1.3 Bird

6.1.3.1 Qigongzui. 15cm w. outdoor.

6.1.3.2 Qigongzui. 20cm w. outdoor.

6.1.3.3 Qigongzui. 18cm w. outdoor.

6.1.3.4 Qigongzui. 25cm w. outdoor.

6.1.3.5 Erdengyan. 45cm h. left wall, indoor.

6.1.3.6 Tonggengzi. 30cm h. on doorframe, overcut by later cave sealing channel.



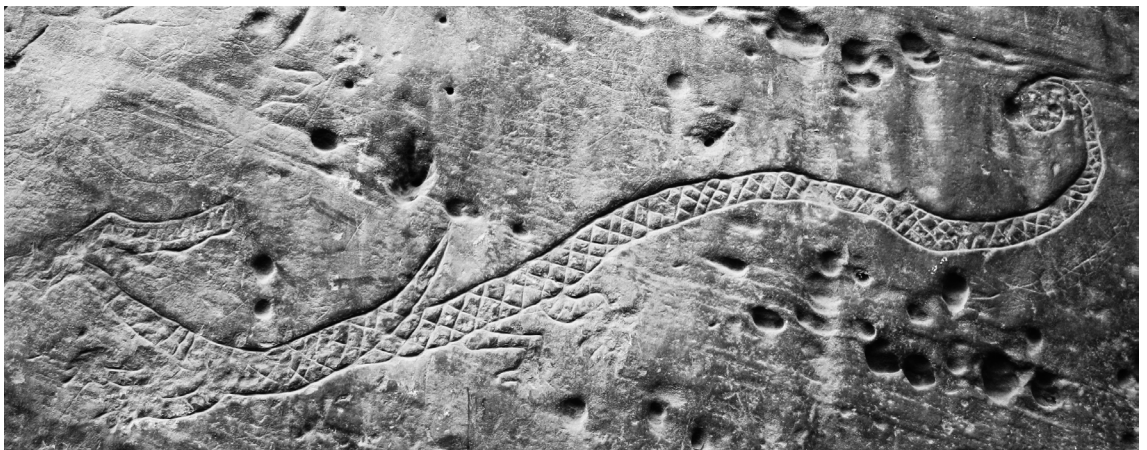
6.1.4 Horse

- 6.1.4.1 Baishulin. 70cm w. left of cave opening, outdoor.
- 6.1.4.2 Qigongzui. 25cm w. left of cave opening, outdoor.
- 6.1.4.3 Miaoziding. 20cm w. right wall, indoor.
- 6.1.4.4 Miaoziding. 20cm w. right wall, indoor.
- 6.1.4.5 Qigedong. c 30cm w. outdoor.
- 6.1.4.6 Qigedong. c 40cm w. outdoor.
- 6.1.4.7 Jingzhuwan. c 35cm h. right wall, indoor.

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6.2 Outliers

6.2.1 Specific to the area

6.2.1.1 Lianghecun. c 100cm w. right of cave opening, outdoor. (panel with unknown motifs)

6.2.1.2 Qigedong. c 120cm w. outdoor. (dragon)

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6.2 Outliers

6.2.1 Specific to the area

6.2.1.3 Guangzhuangkou. 90cm w. outdoor.

6.2.1.4 Qigedong. 100cm w. outdoor. (tiger carrying a tower on its back)



6.2 Outliers

6.2.1 Specific to the area

6.2.1.5 Miaoziding. 60cm h. left wall, indoor. (storied structure with hanging discs: money tree?)

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6.2 Outliers

6.2.1 Specific to the area

6.2.1.6 Shuanghetang. 15cm h. on unfinished cave, outdoor. (frog)

6.2.1.7 Shuanghetang. 20cm w.outdoor.

6.2.1.8 Shuanghetang. 10cm w. outdoor.

6.2.3.9 Yongjia. back wall, indoor. (Sun and moon, disc with a frog, pair of figures)

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6.2 Outliers

6.2.2 Technological borrowings

6.2.2.1 Rongyan. (pair of pumpkins).

6.2.2.2 Shijiashan. (pair of pumpkins).

6.2.2.3 Erdengyan. (pair of pumpkins).

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6.2 Outliers

6.2.3 Iconographical borrowings

6.2.3.1 Qikongzi Heba. 20cm w. upper doorframe, outdoor. (butterfly-shaped symbol (*sheng*))

6.2.3.2 Changgou. 30cm h. right of cave opening, outdoor. (cross)



6.3 Human figure

6.3.1 Partial (only the head)

6.3.1.1 Erdengyan. 15cm h. left side of doorframe, outdoor.

6.3.1.2 Qigongzui. 30cm h. left side of cave opening, outdoor. (wearing a horn-shaped hat).

6.3.1.3 Qigongzui. 20cm h. left side of cave opening, outdoor. (with a cross underneath).

6.3.2 Full

6.3.2.1 Miaoziding. 60cm h. right trench wall, outdoor. (on a pedestal with a hat and raised arm).

6.3.2.2 Miaoziding. 40cm h. back wall, indoor. (naked and raised arm).

6.3.2.3 Qikongzi heba 70cm h. between two cave openings, outdoor. (with a hat and raised arm).

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6.3 Human figure

6.3.2 Full

6.3.2.4 Youting. right of cave opening, indoor. (naked).

6.3.2.5 Shihutou. 65cm h. left of cave opening, outdoor. (lower part is animal).

6.3.2.6 Shihutou. 35cm h. back wall, indoor. (wearing a coat and a hat).

6.3.2.7 Qigongzui. 40cm h. left of cave opening (overcut), outdoor. (wearing a coat and a hat).

6.3.2.8 Shuanghetang. 18cm h. on unfinished cave opening, outdoor. (dressed and holding a fan)

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6.3 Human figure

6.3.2 Full

6.3.2.9 Miao ziding. 15cm w. back wall, indoor. (resembles a monkey).

6.3.2.10 Shixiangzi. 20cm h. back wall, indoor.(dressed).

6.3.2.11 Shibantan. 18cm h.right wall, indoor.(dressed).

6.3.2.12 Qigedong. 25cm h. outdoor. (warrior).

6.3.3 Scenes

6.3.3.1 Changgou. right of door, indoor. (procession of two dressed figures holding a staff).

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6.3.3 Scenes

6.3.3.2 Erdengyan(120cm w) and detail (20cm w). left wall, indoor. (dancers and flute player).

6.3.3.3 Erdengyan (120cm w) and detail (30cm w). right wall, indoor. (dancers and flute player).

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6.4 Indoor panel

6.4.1 Figurative Panel

6.4.1.1 Miaoziding. 100cm w. (with horses, chariot, human figure, storied structure, etc.).

6.4.1.2 Suobian. 50cm w. (with chariot)

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6.4 Indoor panel

6.4.2 Coins

6.4.2.1 Guangzhuangkou. 30cm w. ceiling, indoor.

6.4.2.2 Erdengyan. 35cm w. back wall, indoor.

6.4.3 Geometric Patterns

6.4.3.1 Baishulin. 40cm w. left wall above niche, indoor. (example of a patterned rectangle).

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6.4 Indoor panel

6.4.3 Geometric Patterns

6.4.3.3 Shilongba. 250cm w. back wall, indoor. (example of fishscale pattern).

6.4.3.4 Miaoziding. 40cm w. back wall above niche, indoor. (example of a patterned rectangle).

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6.5 Ceiling ornament

6.5.1 Suobian.

6.5.2 Shidaguai.

6.5.3 Laodongyan.

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6.5 Ceiling ornament

6.5.4 Shibantan.

6.5.5 Shibantan.

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6.5 Ceiling ornament

6.5.6 Shibantan.

6.5.7 Shibantan.

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6.5 Ceiling ornament

6.5.8 Jinzhuwan.

6.5.9 Suobian.

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6.6 Architecture

6.6.1 Tower

6.6.1.1 Lianghecun. c 60cm h. left of cave opening, outdoor.

6.6.1.2 Qigedong. c 60cm h. outdoor.

6.6.1.3 Yutiantang. 50cm h. left wall, indoor.

6.6.1.4 Daokaimen. 45cm h. left of cave opening, outdoor.

6.6.1.5 Qigedong. c 120cm h. between two cave openings, outdoor. (flanked by serpent-tailed creatures holding the sun and moon disc: *fuxi* and *nuwa*).

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6.6 Architecture

6.6.1 Tower

6.6.1.1 Guanzhuangkou. c 65cm h. right of cave opening, indoor.

6.6.1.2 Guanzhuangkou. c 70cm h. right of cave opening, indoor.

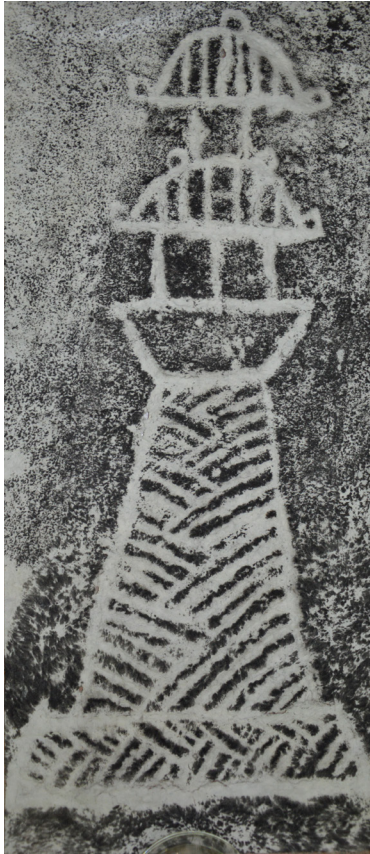
6.6.1.3 Jinzhuwan. 60cm h. left of cave opening, indoor.

6.6.1.4 Qiufaqikongzi. c 60cm h. left on doorframe, indoor.

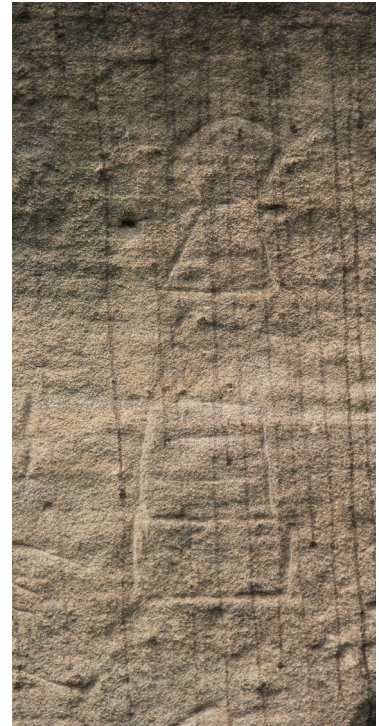
6.6.1.5 Qikongzi heba. c 50cm h. left on doorframe, indoor.

6.6.1.6 Qigedong. c 75cm h. right on doorframe, indoor.

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6.6 Architecture

6.6.1 Tower

6.6.1.8 Sanchahe. 70cm h. outdoor.

6.6.1.9 Qikongzi. c 50cm h. outdoor.

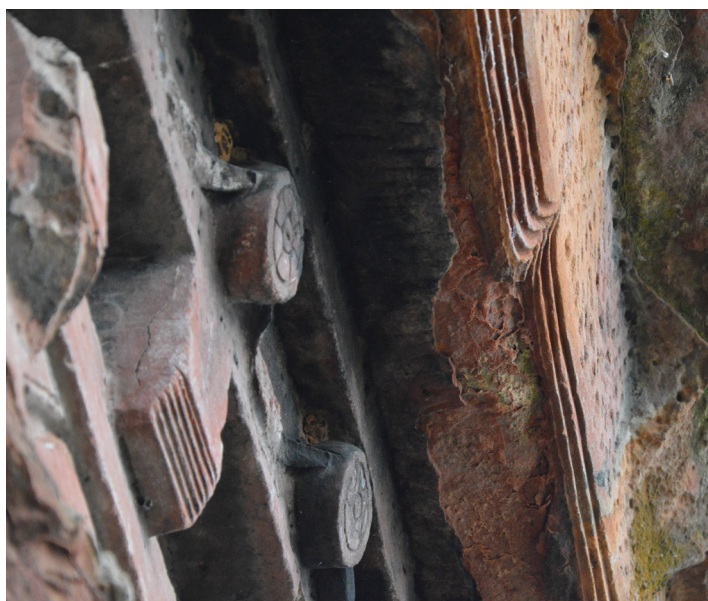
6.6.1.10 Jinzhuwan. 80cm h. left wall, indoor.



6.7 Type 1 Antechamber

6. 7.1. Huangsan

Only the outdoor facade and the antechamber are decorated, while the walls of the burial chambers remain plain. the architectural decoration is a combination of towers, bracket sets and roof cornices. Human figures and animals are integrated in this framework. The craftsmanship is refined, with the use of drills, abrasion in addition to chisel work, and the carvings have a smooth finish.





6.8 Later rock-cut tomb

6.8.1 Tang dynasty rock-cut tomb in Hengshan

Located south of Yibin, this site is atypical for its time. In the Sichuan basin, under the Tang, underground chambers are built out of assembled sandstone stone blocks. The tombs are heavily decorated, with large sized human figures. The guardians flanking the cave openings in Hengshan are carved in a naive style, but Tang dynasty weapons and dress are recognizable.

11.7. General Appendix

The site_ID, and when such information is available, the cave_ID are unique identifiers composed as following: 1st letter of province + 1st letter of county + pinyin initials of site name + cave number.

For example, the Chaoyang site in Qijiang County, Chongqing City, corresponds to the site_ID: C-Q-cy. Cave No.1 in the Chaoyang site corresponds to the cave_ID: C-Q-cy-1.

Below are the corresponding letters for Municipality/province and district/county:

Chongqing	C	Banan	B		
		Fengdu	FE		
		Fuling	F		
		Jiangjin	J		
		Nanchuan	N		
		Qijiang	Q		
		Shizhu	S		
		Wansheng	W		
Guizhou	G	Zunyi	Z	Chishui	C
				Xishui	X
Hubei	HB	Badong	B		
		Efeng	EF		
		Enshi	E		
		Jianshi	J		
		Laifeng	LA		
		Lichuan	L		
		Xianfeng	X		
		Xuan'en	XU		
Hunan	H	Changde	C	Taoyuan	T
		Huaihua	H	Huaihua	H
		Xiangxi	X	Baojing	B
				Guzhang	G
				Yongshun	Y
Sichuan	S	Luzhou	L	Longmatan	LO
				Gulin	G
				Hejiang	H
				Jiangyang	J
				Luxian	L
				Naxi	N
				Xuyong	X
				Changning	C
				Cuiping	CU
		Yibin	Y	Gongxian	G
				Jiang'an	J
				Nanxi	N
				Pingshan	P
				Yibin	Y
				Xingwen	X

11.7.1. Sites Table A (442 entries)

This first table includes all sites which are:

- rock-cut
- in sand
- dated to the Han-Southern Dynasties period

Site ID	Site name	Site Name Chinese	Site Location Chinese	elevation	river	river order	orientation	ground (in m)	Length (in m)	surface (in m2)	number of caves	Estimated period	References
S-Y-Y-bhs	baiheshan	白鹤山	泥溪镇铁牛村 S800m				S	1	8		3	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:721,33-B20
C-N-blg	bailingou	白林沟	龙兴镇永福村 S白沙湾街道							700	7	Eastern Han-Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:218,28-B20; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-Y-CU-bsw	baishawan	白沙湾	Eastern N1km								1	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:710,16-B7
C-Q-bsl	baishulin	柏树林	中峰镇鸳鸯村 S300m							24	3	172-210 CE Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:228,75-B63; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district and Atlas Chongqing 1996:39 – # 0137
S-Y-P-bbq	banbanqiao	板板桥	大乘镇和村 NW300m				W	30			1	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:786,16-B6
S-L-JY-bbna	banbiannan'ao	半边南坳	黄镇邓园村 E850m				N	5	100		5	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.II:194,9-B3
S-Y-J-bbsh	banbianshan	半边山	桐梓镇踏水村 SW1.4km				SW	20	8		3	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:738,13-B6
S-Y-Y-bbs	banbiansi	半边寺	观音镇沙沟村 N200m				N	10	100		2	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:723,64-B51
C-N-bh	banhe	半河	三泉镇半河村							80	6	Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009

C-J-cg	changgou	长沟	柏林镇水沟村																120	3	Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:141,53-B43
C-N-clg	changlinggang	长岭岗	太平场镇翠林村 W800m																560	10	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:218,26-B18; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-Y-P-cp	changpo	长坡	真溪乡丁发村 NE700m											E、N 、W	20	500				78	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:786,19-B9
C-F-cqw	Changqiuwan	长丘湾	同乐乡长青村 一组	594, 2										160°					7.4	1	Eastern Han	3rd National Survey Archive Fuling district
C-J-csb	changshiba	长石坝	吴滩镇现龙村																	1	Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:140,32-B22
S-Y-N-cst	changshita	长石塔	金竹乡会明村 E1km											NE	5	15				2	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:732,3-B2
C-Q-cy	chaoyang	朝阳	石角镇朝阳村 W1.1km																			Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:225,19-B7; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district and Atlas Chongqing 1996:43 – # 01 50
S-L-H-cy	chaoyang	朝阳	福宝镇? 石坝村 E200m											N	5	25				9	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.II:210,16-B10
C-Q-cjw	chenjiawan	陈家湾	文龙街道松榜村																200	4	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:230,105-B93; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-Q-cs	chenshan	陈山	三角镇陈山村 W1km																120	7	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:230,100-B88; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-W-cd	chuandong	穿洞	金桥镇北																1800	30		Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:195,5-B2; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-J-csd	chuanshandong	穿山洞	几江街道五举村																	1	Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:141,47-B37
C-Q-cjb	cuijiabian	崔家碛	文龙街道寨子村 NW150m																240	3	Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:227,41-B29; 3rd National Survey Archive

C-W-hjg	huangjiagou	黄家沟	金桥镇庙树村 NW1.5km									120	6		Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:195,10-B7; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-Y-C-hjp	huangjuepo	黄桷坡	长宁镇龙窝村 NW500m					W	5	10			2		Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:749,21-B17
S-Y-Y-hjw	huangjuewan	黄桷湾	泥溪镇万明村 SE1km					W	5	50			4		Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:721,42-B29
C-Q-hlb	huanglabing	黄腊丙	三角镇先锋村 S500m									100	6		Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:230,104-B92; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-Q-hlb	huanglangbian	黄狼土扁	扶欢乡石足村 SW 500 m										2		Atlas Chongqing 1996:43- 0148; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-Q-hnw	huangniwan	黄泥湾	三角镇瓦屋村 W									20	2		Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:230,109-B97; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-Y-Y-hs	huangsan	黄伞	高场镇拥护村 SW600m							40			188		Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:720,28-B15
C-S-hsz	huanshanzi	环山子	龙沙镇油房社区双 桥组环山子												
C-Q-hdw	hudouwan	胡豆湾	篆塘镇中林村 E1.5km										1		Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:227,49-B37; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-Y-Y-hly	huilongyan	回龙岩	高场镇证明村 NE800m					E	15	40			8		Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:720,26-B13
S-Y-Y-hzb	huozhangba	火掌坝	泥南乡 W1km					S	6	25			7		Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:722,44-B31
S-Y-Y-jdy	jiandingyan	尖顶岩	白花镇刘家村 SE300m					NW	1				1		Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:722,57-B44
S-Y-X-jjs	jianjianshan	尖尖山	九丝城镇新丰村 W1.7km					N	25	100			12		Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:779,4-B2
S-Y-Y-jsy	jianshanyan	尖山岩	王场乡革新村 W600m					E	10				1		Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:722,60-B47
C-Q-jp	jiepai	界牌	三角镇石栏村									800	47		Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:230,110-B98; 3rd

S-L-LO-md	mandong	蛮洞	金龙乡颜坪村 N300m																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																			</
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S-Y-J-met	miao'ertuo	苗儿沱	桐梓镇长江村 S1.5km															Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:737,12-B5
C-Q-mg	miaogang	庙杠	篆塘镇民丰村 S200m															Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:228,64-B52; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-S-my	miaoyan	庙岩	龙沙镇油房社区油 房居民小组															Protected by the municipal government on the 15-12- 2010
C-Q-mzd	miaoziding	苗子顶	永城镇中华村 NE1.8km															Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:228,59-B47; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district and Atlas Chongqing 1996:50-0177
C-Q-mzd	miaozidong	庙子洞	隆盛镇狮铃村 S200m															Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:227,52-B40; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-F-my	Mingyue	明月	大顺乡明月村 一组	778						4 to 7	19	237	3					3rd National Survey Archive Fuling district
C-Q-mdq	modanqiao	磨单桥	新盛镇桂圆村 E50m															Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:227,38-B26; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-Q-mdh	muduhe	母渡河	三江街道															Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:227,48-B36; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-Q-mty	mutiyan	木梯岩	郭扶镇安平村 NE2km															Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:228,66-B54; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-J-nhq	naiheqiao	奈何桥	德感街道涪溪村 4 组															Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:140,34-B24
S-L-L-nsh	niushihan	牛石函	太伏镇永胜村 W2km															Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.II:236,11-B1
S-Y-Y-nxm	niximandongbia n	泥溪壩洞 扁	泥溪镇泥溪村 W1km															Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:722,43-B30
S-Y-C-pt	paotong	泡桐	古河镇泡桐村															Atlas Sichuan 2009

																		only 10 tombs. I chose the greater number of tombs
C-Q-qkzhb	qikongzi Heba	七孔子河坝	中峰乡新庄村 七孔子 N 400 m															Atlas Chongqing 199648-0167; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-L-N-qls	qingliangshan	清凉山	渠坝镇清凉村 NW1.5km															Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.II:203,9-B5
C-F-qls	Qinlongshan	青龙山	龙潭镇万寿村 四组	777														3rd National Survey Archive Fuling district
C-F-qm	Qinmu	青木	同乐乡寿坝村 七组	764, 8														3rd National Survey Archive Fuling district
C-B-qsb	qishubian	七树扁	石滩镇天台村 后沟 社七树扁	648. 9														discovered in 1987; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-N-qsb	qishubian	漆树碛	神童镇金堂村 W500m															Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:217,9-B1; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-Q-qfqkz	qiufaqikongzi	秋发七孔子	丁山镇秋发村 W800m															Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:226,33-B21; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district and Atlas Chongqing 1996:42-0145; 1996 and 2009 correspond, addition of four measurements
S-L-N-qty	quantianyan	圈田岩	上马镇朝龙村 W300m															Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.II:203,8-B4
S-Y-C-qy	qunyi	群益	古河镇群益村 W1km															Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:748,10-B6
S-Y-J-rma	renmin'an	人民 Han	留耕镇人民村 N700m															Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:737,11-B4
C-Q-ry	rongyan	溶岩	石角镇溶岩村 W1.5km															Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:226,21-B9; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district and Atlas Chongqing 1996:43-0151
G-Z-X-rw	ruwei	儒维	土城镇儒维		chishui													discovered in 1994;

																			Chongqing 1996:50-0174; 1996 and 2009 correspond, addition of door measurements and cave number from 1996
C-Q-stw	shatuwan	沙土湾	文龙街道思 S 村 W700m												250	8		Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:230,107-B95; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-Y-Y-sw	shawan	沙湾	古柏乡古柏村 NE300m					S	15	20						8		Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:721,34-B21
G-Z-X-sx	shaxi	沙溪	官店镇里狮至桃林 乡																discovered in 2014; Xishui wengquansuo
S-Y-C-sxg	shaxigou	沙溪沟	长宁镇曙光村 E800m						NE	1	100					3		Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:749,24-B20
C-Q-srk	shengrenkong	圣人孔	横山镇 Eastern												120	2		Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:229,92-B80; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-Q-sdg	shidaguai	石大拐	篆塘镇渔梁村 NE500m												70	2		Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:228,69-B57; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district and Atlas Chongqing 1996:49-0172
C-S-sf	shifan	示范塘	西沱镇云梯居委沙 湾组马家湾															Han	
C-Q-sf	shifo	石佛	丁山镇石佛村 S1.5km												750	7		Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:226,35-B23; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-Q-sht	shihutou	石虎头	扶欢镇崇恩村 E1.2km												560	18		Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:226,24-B12; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district and Atlas Chongqing 1996:38-0134; 1996 calls it Shifutou, while 2009 calls it Shihutou. I keep the most recent place name.

C-Q-sjz	shijiazui	石家咀	永新镇云品村 S900m															1		Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:229,79-B67; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-J-sk	shikan	石坎	柏林镇双凤村															500	5	Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:141,51-B41
C-Q-slg	shilangan	石栏杆	三角镇石栏杆村 SE S 岸街道龙湾村 社 区 E															150	13	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:230,108-B96; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district and Atlas Chongqing 1996:45-0156
S-Y-CU-slw	shiliwan	狮理湾																	5	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:709,10-B1
S-Y-Y-sqy	shiqunyan	石群岩	李场镇祥湾村 NE1.8km																1	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:721,30-B17
S-Y-Y-sty	shitanyan	石滩岩	古柏乡岷江村 NW300m																4	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:721,35-B22
C-Q-stz	shitizi	石梯子	石角镇周家村 W1km																6	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:225,20-B8; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district and Atlas Chongqing 1996:44-0152; 1996 calls the sites Shityan instead of Shitizi, like in 2009
C-F-sxz	Shixiangzi	石巷子	龙潭镇万寿村 五组 奇峰镇金塘村 NW300m															100	10	Eastern Han	3rd National Survey Archive Fuling district
S-L-L-sy	shiyan	狮岩																	1	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.II:236,12-B2
C-F-syz	Shiyazi	石埡子	奇峰镇大同村 W400m															75	2	Eastern Han	3rd National Survey Archive Fuling district
S-L-L-szw	shiziwan	狮子湾																	4	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.II:237,25-B15
C-F-szz	Shizizui	狮子嘴	龙潭镇新乐村 五组															217	21	Eastern Han	3rd National Survey Archive Fuling district
S-Y-Y-sc	shouchang	寿昌	观音镇寿昌村 SE2km																1	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:722,54-B41
S-Y-G-sdz	shuangdongzi	双洞子	上罗镇田家村 SW800m																8	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:774,6-B4

C-Q-slw	shuanglongwan	双龙湾	三角镇大湾村 W1km									150	6	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:230,103-B91; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-Y-Y-sy	shuangyi	双谊	双谊乡西 150 米					E	10	100		9		Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:722,53-B40
C-Q-sht	shuanhetang	郭扶	郭扶镇									2		181 CE Eastern Han	3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-Y-Y-sby	shuibayan	水巴岩	合什镇合江村 SE50m					SE	5	40		4		Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:723,66-B53
C-F-sp	Shuiying	水盈	龙桥街道办事处 N 拱社区的长江南岸 三级台地上	170								200	3	Eastern Han	3rd National Survey Archive Fuling district
C-Q-sjs	sijiashan	斯家山	横山镇隆兴村 SE800m									400	13	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:230,97-B85; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district and Atlas Chongqing 1996:39-0136. 1996 calls the site Shijiashan (世家山) instead of Sijiashan.; 1996 gives 26 tombs, while 2009 gives only 13 tombs. I chose the greater number of tombs. addition of door measurements and cave number from 1996
S-Y-G-slw	siliwan	斯栗湾	下罗乡梧桐村 NW1km					S	15	10		4		Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:774,7-B5
C-Q-sw	siwan	四湾	篆塘镇民丰村 N300m									2000	3	Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:228,65-B53; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district and Atlas Chongqing 1996:50-0175. 1996 and 2009 correspond, addition of door measurements and cave number from 1996

C-Q-slg	songlingang	松林岗	扶欢镇岚垭村 S600m															160	11	165 CE Eastern Han-Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:226,22-B10; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district and Atlas Chongqing 1996:39-0137
S-Y-Y-sep	su'erpo	素儿坡	孔滩镇天堂村 N500m、																3	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:722,61-B48
C-B-sb	suobian	梭扁	跳石镇天坪村 八社 梭扁	671															3		3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-Q-tgp	taigongpu	太公铺	赶水镇太公村 W400m																	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:226,27-B15; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-Y-Y-tp	taiping	太平	高场镇七井村 E1.1km																95	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:720,21-B8
C-Q-tzs	taizishang	台子上	文龙街道新兴村 S500m															150	2		Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:230,106-B94; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-J-tw	taowan	陶湾	油溪镇陶湾村															160	6	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:139,17-B7
S-Y-CU-tg	tiangong	天宫	高店镇天宫村 S1.5km																1	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:709,12-B3
C-Q-tq	tianqiao	天桥	扶欢镇大石板村 S30m															120	7	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:226,25-B13; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-L-L-tt	tiantang	天堂	立石镇天堂村 W300m																23	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.II:236,17-B7
C-N-txq	tianxingqiao	天星桥	S 城街道天星村 W200m																	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:217,10-B2; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-Y-Y-tdw	tiedengwan	铁灯湾	合什镇合江村 SE40m															2000	148		Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:723,65-B52
C-N-tkw	tiekuangwan	铁矿湾	黎香湖镇 Eastern N1.5km															120	9	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:218,27-B19; 3rd National Survey Archive

S-Y-N-xtz	xuetangzui	学堂咀	马家乡楠木村 W800m					E	10	300	2	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:733,8-B7
S-Y-C-xh	xuhong	旭红	老翁镇旭红村 SE1km					E	0,8		1	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:749,17-B13
C-S-yk	yakou	丫口	三河镇三店村 三河 组丫口									Han	Protected by the municipal government on the 15-12- 2010
C-J-yk	yakou	垭口	德感街道垭口村 5 组								100	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:140,37-B27
C-W-yk	yakou	哑口	万 E 镇五合村 W500m								80		Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:196,11-B8; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-L-X-ydb	yandengba	烟灯坝	兴隆乡凤凰村 S700m					S	5	210	25	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.II:224,3-B1
S-L-L-yds	yandengshan BRICK TOMB	烟灯山	太伏镇水利村 SW1km							1200 m2	3	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.II:235,A1-1
C-Q-yfg	yanfenggou	岩风沟	永新镇民安村 N2.5km									Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:229,83-B71; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district and Atlas Chongqing 1996:38-0133
S-Y-Y-yby	yangbanyan	羊板岩	泥溪镇会龙村 S150m					W	10	25	6	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:721,32-B19
S-Y-Y-yj	yangjia	杨家	泥溪镇杨家村 内 600m					E	5		1	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:722,46-B33
C-N-yjq	yangjiaqiao	杨家桥	民主乡民主村 N300m									Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:218,23-B15; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-J-yjt	yangjiatan	杨家滩	先锋镇夹滩社区								400	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:140,44-B34
C-Q-ytp	yangtianpang	秧田旁	永新镇新建村 SE1km								240	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:229,81-B69; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district and Atlas Chongqing 1996:48 – #

S-Y-CU-yjz	yaojiazui	姚家嘴	S 广镇和平村 姚家嘴																1	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:710,17-B8
C-Q-yzt	yazitang	鸭子塘	新盛镇牛尾村 W1km															250	8	Eastern Han-Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:227,47-B35; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-Y-C-yx	yixin	益新	竹海镇 E 南 600m															80	4	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:750,35-B31
S-Y-Y-yl	yongle	永乐	古柏乡永乐村 SE2km															20	7	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:721,38-B25
C-W-yfg	youfanggou	油房沟	金桥镇河坝村 W800m															1000	9		Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:195,9-B6; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-Y-J-yks	yokoushang	坳口上	蟠龙乡李岩村 N700m															50	11	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:738,15-B8
G-Z-X-yjy	yuanjiayou	袁家坳	土城镇袁家坳																1	Eastern Han	discovered in 1994; KG2002(7)669-672.
C-Q-ysb	yuanshiba	圆石坝	隆盛镇圆石村 S1km																1	Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:227,51-B39; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-L-J-yds	yudingshan	渔顶山	况场镇渔顶山 Eastern N700m															200	13	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.II:195,13-B7
C-J-yhg	yuhaogou	渔濠沟	嘉平镇寒坡村																1	Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:140,43-B33
S-Y-CU-yj	yujian	鱼剑	高店镇鱼剑村 W1km															5	1	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:710,13-B4
S-Y-C-yj	yujiang	清江	下场镇清江村 SE800m															150	21	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:748,7-B3
C-Q-ylih	yulianghe	渔梁河	篆塘镇渔梁村 S10m																1	Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:227,50-B38; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-L-H-ytt	yutiantang	鱼天堂	榕右乡长乐村 W1km															23	12	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.II:210,7-B1
S-L-H-zig	zhangjiagou	张家沟	合江镇西张家沟																5	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.II:211,31-B

S-Y-J-zjw	zhangjiawan	张家湾	迎安镇幸福存 Eastern N1km				S	5				1	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:737,8-B1
C-J-zks	zhangkoushi	张 口 石	柏林镇思四面村									2	Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:141,49-B39
C-J-zj	zhaojia	赵家	蔡家镇茅湾村								130	13	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:141,54-B44
C-J-zjl	zhengjialiang	郑家梁	德感街道和爱村								450	8	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:140,33-B23
C-N-zj	zhongjiang	中江	大观镇中江村 N5km								100	7	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:217,18-B10; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
C-N-zt	zhongtu	中图	河图乡中图村 S1km								7000	12	Eastern Han- Southern Dynasties	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:218,20-B12; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
S-Y-P-zx	zhongxin	中心	真溪乡丁发村 N900m				W	2	30			8	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:786,20-B10
C-J-zj	zhoujia	周家	先锋镇绣庄社区									1	Eastern Han	Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:140,40-B30
S-Y-Y-zbs	zhuanbaoshan	转包山	高场镇丰收村 N700m				N	17	100			37	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:720,22-B9
C-S-zw	zhuanwa	砖瓦溪	黎场乡黎场村 砖瓦 组 砖瓦溪										Han	
S-Y-C-zlw	zhulinwan	竹林湾	铜罗乡大坝村 S1.2km				NW	0,5				1	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:750,33-B29
S-Y-Y-zsp	zhushanpo	竹山坡	永庆镇竹山村 S800m				E	2				1	Eastern Han	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:722,52-B39
C-Q-zsw	zongshuwan	棕树湾	新盛镇伏龙村 E150m											Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II:227,39-B27; 3rd National Survey Archive Banan district
H-C-T-bjs	bijianshan	笔架山	郑家驿乡郑家驿村 七组笔架山	81	Dengxi 澄 溪 river	2		5				5		Taoyuan 2010
H-C-T-cjz	chenjiazui	陈家嘴	黄石镇桃花村 老屋 组	85	Xiaofuxi 小汭溪	3		5				6		Taoyuan 2010

11.7.2. Sites Table B (120 entries)

This second table includes all sites which are:

- settlements
- assembled stones tombs
- cliff burial (unidentified elevated riverside burial on cliff)
- suspended coffin (elevated coffin secured to riverside cliffs)
- coffin stored in natural cave

site id	site name	site name chinese	site location chinese	elevation	river	type	orientation	height from ground (in m)	length (in m)	caves	estimated period	sand(stone) or lime(stone)	reference	notes
H-X-B-bek	baiekou	白鹤口			you river Liangxi 两 溪 river Baihushan 白虎山 south slope	cliff burial							Wang Yu 2004	
HB-J-bhs	baihushan	白虎山	长梁乡 and 三宝乡清河 村 柳树槽			rock-cut		130		3	unknown Tang Song	sand	Atlas Hubei 2002: 531, 20-B8 and Deng Hui1999:282-4	all three placed on a same horizontal level
S-Y-Y-bdy	beidouyan	北斗岩	横江镇 N 斗 村			rock-cut		4,5		5	Song	sand	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:723,68-B55	depictions
HB-XU-cth	changtanhe	长潭河	长潭河仙人 洞			coffin stored in natural cave				1	Song	lime	Deng Hui1999:282-4	
HB-J-cyg	chaoyanggu an	朝阳观	建始城 W 南 1.7km		Guangrun 广润 river south bank	rock-cut				3	Tang Song	sand	Deng Hui1999:282-4	
C-S-dgy	dagouyan	大沟	三河镇玉岭			cliff burial					Song	sand	2010 年 12 月 15 日被	

C-J-jm	jinmiao	金庙	蔡家镇清溪沟村																Atlas Chongqing 2009 Vol.II: 141,55-B45		
HB-B-icl	jiucenglou	九层楼	平阳坝镇黄家坪村																Atlas Hubei 2002: 526, 136-B63 and Deng Hui1999:282-4	lime	only 2 wooden beams, no coffin left
C-S-ket	kuertang	哭儿塘	三河镇永和村 谢家组仙人洞																2010 年 12 月 15 日被市政府公布为市级文物保护单位	sand	
C-S-lsyz	laoshijizi	老石基子	三河镇大河村 新开组岩清老石基子																2010 年 12 月 15 日被市政府公布为市级文物保护单位	sand	
S-Y-lyz	laoyingzui	老鹰嘴	复龙镇春天村 N400m																Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:724,91-B71	sand	gutterline
HB-L-lfd	lefudian	乐福店	乐福店乡镇处																Deng Hui1999:282-4	unkno wn	
S-Y-ls	leidashi	雷打石	双龙镇水井村 NW																Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:724,80-B67	sand	
HB-X-jyq	lianyuquan	鲢鱼泉	尖山 Tang 崖河下游																Deng Hui1999:282-4	lime	
HB-E-lmq	liaomoqian	廖陌阡	罗针乡																Deng Hui1999:282-4	lime	
H-X-B-lybe	liyeber	里耶比耳																	Wang Yu 2004		
HB-B-icy	longchuan	龙船河, 龙船崖	官渡口镇红花岭村																Atlas Hubei 2002: 526, 138-B65 and Deng Hui1999:240	lime	only wooden beams, 2 coffins

	an		龙镇, 横江镇						0	7		Vol.III:723.67-B54	site with inscriptions: 明正德七年, 弘治十五年“and several depictions (warrior, tiger, architectire deer, rabbit, ox, flower vas...)”
C-FE-smh	shimahe	石马河					rock-cut				Song	Wang Yu 2004	
HB-B-szl	shiziling	狮子岭	野三关镇谭家岭村				suspended coffin	80			unknown	Atlas Hubei 2002:526, 135-B62	
C-S-shz	shuanghaozi	双号子	三星乡雷庄村 雄 Yuan 组双号子				cliff burial				Song	2010 年 12 月 15 日被市政府公布为市级文物保护单位	
H-X-B-sz	shuizhai	水寨				you river	rock-cut and cliff burial				Song	Wang Yu 2004	
C-S-sfs	sifangshi	四方石	三河镇四方村 谢家组大 中坝				cliff burial				Song	2010 年 12 月 15 日被市政府公布为市级文物保护单位	
HB-J-sseb	sishierba	四十二 坝	猫坪乡四十 二坝				rock-cut		6	?	Tang Song	Deng Hui1999:282-4	
C-S-tjb	taojiaba	陶家坝	西沱镇沿江 居委陶家组 陶家坝				assembled stones				Han-Six Dynasties		
HB-L-tsq	tashuiqiao	踏水桥	乐福店乡			乐福店踏 水桥岸	rock-cut			3	Song	Deng Hui1999:282-4	
S-Y-ttg	tiantanggou	天堂沟	双龙镇五星 村					E		44	Song, Ming	Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:723.75-B62	relief guardian figures flanking cave opening, gutterline
HB-J-tzwnw	tianziwannianwan	天子万年 湾	天生镇家垭 村			Zhaci 榨茨 河 east bank	rock-cut	8 to 23 m	5		unknown	Atlas Hubei 2002:531, 24-B12	
HB-L-tls	tongluoguan	铜锣关	铜锣乡						2		Song	Deng Hui1999:282-4	
HB-J-tby	toubayan	头坝堰	长梁乡桂花 村			Chengzhu 盛竹 river north bank	rock-cut	12	17		Song and Tang	Atlas Hubei 2002: 531, 14-B2 and Deng Hui1999:282-4	
H-X-G-wcb	wachangba	瓦厂包	罗依溪镇青			you river	shaft tomb		2		Han	Atlas Hunan 1997:399, 8-B3	

								0										Vol.III:719,2-A2		
HB-J-jxj	xiaojingxia	小径峡	天生镇家垭村															Atlas Hubei 2002: 531, 23-B11 and Deng Hui1999:282-4		
C-S-xdz	xindianzi	新店子	三河镇川主村 店子组新店子岩脚															2010 年 12 月 15 日被市政府公布为市级文物保护单位		
HB-B-yiw	yangjiawa	杨佳娃	平阳坝镇叶子坝村															Atlas Hubei 2002: 526, 137-B64 and Deng Hui1999:282-4		more than 10 wooden beams, no coffin left
C-S-yep	yaoerpo	摇儿坡,	S 宾镇红星村 红光组摇儿坡,又名寨坡															2010 年 12 月 15 日被市政府公布为市级文物保护单位		
S-Y-yis	yilaoshan	夷牢山	双龙镇双龙村 NE1km															Atlas Sichuan 2009 Vol.III:724,79-B66		relief guardian figures flanking cave opening
H-X-B-yzk	yizika	依子卡	保靖县迁陵镇,毛沟镇															Wang Yu 2004		
H-X-B-ys	youshui	酉水	梅花乡地段较为密集																	discovered in 1975 ,1978; 1 other type of Han tomb, 11 Han settlements and 11 spots where Han bronzes were excavated as well as : wooden coffin planks, cannabis, cotton, sil, bamboo items
HB-E-ybd	yubodong	鱼泊洞	罗针乡															Atlas Hunan 1997:397, 55-B4		
																		Deng Hui1999:282-4		

11.7.3. Caves Table (579 entries)

site id	site name	cave no.	door exterior width	door exterior height	door interior width	door interior height	layers	cave length	cave width	cave height	ceiling shape	groundplan	volume and type of annex	annex length	annex width	annex height	coffin number	coffin type	coffin length	coffin width	coffin height	depictions	inscriptions
H-X-B-bek	baiekou																0						
S-Y-Y-bhs-2	baiheshan	2															0						
HB-J-bhs	baihushan				2	2	0										0						
C-N-blg	bailingou						2	2,6	1,4	1,3	vault	rectangular	single				0					0	
S-Y-C-bsw	baishawan							5,6 4	2,2	1,5							1	wooden					
C-Q-bsl	baishulin						3	2,5	1	1,0 2	triangular	rectangular	single				0					3	
C-Q-bsl-0	baishulin																0						1
C-Q-bsl-1	baishulin	1															0						1
C-Q-bsl-2	baishulin	2															0						1
C-Q-bsl-3	baishulin	3															0						1
S-Y-P-bbq	banbangqiao	1	0,6	0,7													0						
S-L-J-bbna-1	banbiannan'ao	1					3	3,5	2	1,7	vault						1	decorated quarried	1,9	0,7	0,7 5		
S-Y-J-bbsh	banbianshan	3	1,1 5	1,5				6,4	2,2	2,5	barrel vault		back wall niche	1,4 6	1,7	1,1	1	quarried	2,1 7	0,7 5	0,6		
S-Y-Y-bbs-2	banbiansi	2	1	0,75				4	2	1,3 7	flat		with tunnel	2,7	1,6	0,9	2	quarried	2,3 3	0,6 5	0,6		
C-N-bh	banhe						1	2,8	2,2	1,4	vault	rectangular	single				0					0	
S-Y-J-bbs	baobaoshi							10	3	2							0						

C-Q-xlg-1	xianligang	1	1,2 7	1, 3	0,6	0,6 7	4	2,9 7	2,3 5	1,6 2	triangular	rectangul ar	single					0			1	1	1
C-N-xrd	xianrendong						2	2,3	2,6	1,6	vault	rectangul ar	single					0				0	
H-X-B-xrd	xianrendong																	0					
H-C-T-xrd	xianrendong																	0					
HB-J-xrd	xianrendong			4	3	0												0					
HB-LA-xrd	xianrendong																	0					
H-C-T-xrw	xianrenwan																	0					
S-Y-Y-xab	xiao'anba																	0					
S-Y-Y-xbz-9	xiaobazi	9	1	1, 3			2	4	2,4 1,4 3	1,5 2,9 1	vault		back wall niche	0,7	1,2	1,1 3	1	quarried					
C-Q-xbh	xiaobianhe						2	2,4 6	2,4 3	2,9 1	triangular	rectangul ar	single				0					0	
C-J-xgd	xiaogaodong						2	1,9	1,5	1,2	vault		2 chambers (with antechamber) and with trench (2.2x1.7x1. 2)	3,2	2,4	1,2	1	decorate d rock- cut				1	
S-Y-C-xgz	xiaogengzi	1	2	1, 6				2,8	1,8 6	1,8 8	vault		antechamber	3,1 6	2,08	1,7 2	0						
C-Q-xjz	xiaojiazui						3	1,8	1,9 5	2,2 5	vault	rectangul ar	single				0					1	
C-Q-xjz-2	xiaojiazui	2	1,2	1, 25	0,7	0,8 5	2	1,8	1,9 5	1,3 5	barrel vault		single				0						
HB-J-xjx	xiaojingxia				3	3	0										0						
S-Y-C-xl	xiaolong							3	2,6	1,8	flat		2 side chambers	1,4	2	1,8	0						
S-L-X-xzs-1	xiazishan	1	1,5	1, 8				2,5	1,6	1,8	vault						0				1		
S-L-X-xzs-12	xiazishan	1															0				1		
S-L-X-xzs-19	xiazishan	1															0						

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9. Discussion

- 9.1. The dendritic market network. Source: Hirth 1978:38.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1. Three-layered recessed doors and niches in Shanshuping. Fengdu district, Chongqing municipality. Estimated to date from the Song period (10th-13th century CE). Cave height circa 80 cm.

13 Bibliography

The sources for this study are mainly archaeological, while textual sources are used to reconstruct the historical geography of the area, and situations where the agency of cliff burials in the landscape and on their viewers are reported.

A section on map datasets, principally from the CHGIS project, indicates the type of basic information available to construct my maps.

Historical sources are generally transmitted official histories or texts attached to the area and period (*Hanshu*, *Hou Hanshu*, *Huayang guo zhi*), apart from the epigraphic material found in the cliff tombs in existing compilations (Gao Wen 1990) and collected during fieldwork. Some even the locational accent of this study and the exercise in long term frontier history, some geographical treatises (*Shuijing zhu*, *Yuanhe junxian tuzhi*) and collected stories or travel diaries (*Chaoye Qianzai*) have been used. Works of compilation and analysis (Yang Gengwang 1986; Byon 1979) are essential guides in accessing these sources.

Major references include atlases published after the 3rd National Archaeological Survey for all the Provinces covered by this study (Atlas), as well as the volumes published in the decade after the Three Gorges rescue archaeology project (Chongqing 1997-2001). Archaeological reports published in academic journals for specific sites are also compiled here (Qigedong 1985; Santai 2007). However, the bulk of the material was collected through personal survey in the years 2014 and 2015, or derived from the 3rd National Archaeological Survey Database shared by local archaeological offices at the county, District or municipal level (National Archeological Survey unpublished data 2009).

Monographs (Jiang Xiaochun 2010), unpublished PhD thesis (Luo Erhu 2001; He Shiwei 2012) as well as preliminary surveys published in academic journals (Deng Hui 1990; Wang Yu 2004) form the secondary literature in Chinese language.

Publications in Western languages treat the area and the topic concerned by this study, sometimes under the form of unpublished PhD (Mengoni 2004; Miller 2011) or monographs (Chen Xuan 2015) or case study-based articles (Erickson 2003). Some recent archaeological monographs reconsider the centre-periphery paradigm (Flad and Chen Pochan 2013) and the linearity of cultural assimilation in the Highlands area (Yao 2015).

The section on secondary literature also features a few key works on Han funerary art and conceptions (Brown 2007; Wu Hung 2011), Later Han history and society as well as the *longue durée* of the Southwest frontier (Bin Yang 2009; Scott 2009).

Theoretical works mainly cover the themes of funerary spaces and places (Bloch 1971), culture contact (Barth 1969), collapse theory (Yoffee and Cowgill 1991), prehistoric trade (Hirth 1978), and frontier studies (Parker and Rodseth 2005; Mullaney et al. 2012).

13.1 Map datasets

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